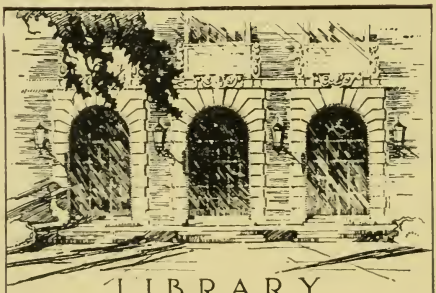
Eliza Giffard

Vergnis Flintshire



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THE

MYSTERIOUS HAND.

A ROMANCE.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.

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THE

Mysterious Hand;

OR,

SUBTERRANEAN HORROURS!

A ROMANCE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

AUGUSTUS JACOB CRANDOLPH.

Ordina in guisa
Gli umani eventi il ciel, che tutti a tutti
Siam necessarj, e 'l più felice spesso
Nel più misero trova
Che sperar, che temer.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
PRINTED AT THE
Minerva-Press,
FOR A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.
(Successors to Lane, Newman, & Co.)
LEADENHALL-STREET.
1811.

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THE

MYSTERIOUS HAND.

CHAP. I.

Yet show some pity.—
I shew it most of all when I show justice;
For then I pity those I do not know,
Which a dismiss'd offence would after gall:
And do him right, that answering one foul wrong,
Lives not to act another.

.....

With that he gave his able horse the head,
And, bending forward, struck his agile heels
Against the panting sides of his poor jade,
Up to the rowel-head; and, starting so,
He seem'd in running to devour the way.

.....

Je vous revois enfin, cher objet de mes vœux!
Momens tant souhaités! ô jour trois fois heureux!

THE silence that had been observed during Theodore's speech terminated with it.

 A mur-

A murmur of compassion and admiration spread through the entire court as he concluded, when the judge, rising from his seat, thus addressed the jury :

" Gentlemen, you have heard the evidence offered to prove the prisoner's guilt, and you have attended to his reasoning against the right of pronouncing a capital conviction in any case. The former was clear and short ; the latter able and ingenious. No point of law has occurred, and it is for you to determine on the prisoner's guilt or innocence, and on the justness of his arguments. You stand in a situation that requires delicacy and judgment. I believe you possess both, and I am sure that your verdict will be the result of good sense and humanity. It is unnecessary for me to recapitulate the evidence ; it must be deeply impressed on your minds. I willingly

willingly avoid so painful a task. The law of England has made you judges of matters of fact, and nothing else is here to be considered. If I were required to give my opinion of the case, I would say, without hesitation, that a clearer one I never heard, and that it is impossible to believe the prisoner innocent. But herein you are to decide, and therefore I shall be silent. With respect to his arguments against the punishment of death, it might be supposed that it is my duty to refute them, if they be refutable; but such a supposition would be erroneous. I am here to interpret the laws, and to enforce them. It is not for a judge to moot points of philosophy, or to argue on topics not known to, or not admitted by, his predecessors. I repeat it, therefore, gentlemen, you are to decide on the evidence that has been

produced, and you are, or are not, as your wisdom shall govern you, to be influenced by the eloquent and persuasive defence that you have heard. You now know my sentiments, gentlemen, and you may retire."

The jury accordingly retired, and during their absence, which continued from four in the afternoon until eleven at night, suspense and anxiety were pictured on every countenance in the court. A noise from the room to which they had gone would sometimes produce a whisper of "Are they coming?" or, "They are coming," and instantly every eye would be directed towards the door through which they were to pass, and from that to the unfortunate prisoner at the bar. "How well he spoke!" one would say.—"How nervous his language!" another.—"How handsome he looks!"

looks!"—"What an interesting man!"—"I am sure he is innocent."—"If I were on the jury, I would starve before I would find him guilty." These, and a thousand other observations, were made by the by-standers, while Theodore sat, almost all the time, with his face resting on his hand, and this supported by his knee. At last the door opens, and the jury advance to their box.

Clerk of the Arraignments. Gentlemen, are you all agreed on your verdict?

Jury. Yes.

Clerk of the Arraignments. Who shall say for you?

Jury. Our foreman.

Clerk of the Arraignments. Theodore Dalbert, hold up thy hand. Gentlemen of the jury, look upon the prisoner. How say you, is Theodore Dalbert guilty of the

felony and murder whereof he stands indicted, or not guilty?

Jury. Guilty.

Clerk of the Arraignments. What goods or chattels, lands or tenements, had he, at the time of the said felony and murder committed, or at any time since, to your knowledge?

Jury. None.

Clerk of the Arraignments. Hearken to your verdict, as the court hath recorded it. You say that Theodore Dalbert is guilty of the felony and murder whereof he stands indicted, and that he had not any goods or chattels, lands or tenements, at the time of the said felony and murder committed, or at any time since, to your knowledge; and so you say all.—Theodore Dalbert, hold up thy hand. You have been

been indicted of felony and murder. You have been thereupon arraigned, and you pleaded thereto, not guilty; and, for your trial, you have put yourself upon God and your country, which country have found you guilty. What have you now to say for yourself, why the court should not proceed to give judgment of death upon you, according to law?

Crier. Oyez; my Lords the King's Justices do strictly charge and command all manner of persons to keep silence, whilst sentence of death is passing on the prisoner at the bar, upon pain of imprisonment.

The wretched convict had heard the tremendous word uttered by the foreman, with the wild and vacant gaze of extreme and hopeless suffering, his cheeks pale, his mouth unclosed, his lips trembling, his arms advanced, and his head thrown back.

But this agony of despair was soon succeeded by coolness and apparent resignation. He sunk his head slowly, and spoke not another word.

The judge was still to pass sentence. He expatiated on the heinousness of the crime, aggravated, he said, in this case, by treachery and ingratitude. He declared that, in his recollection, no accusation of murder had been so fully proved as this one had been; that it was impossible to entertain the slightest doubt of the prisoner's guilt, or of his malice prepense; that his arguments against the justice of capital punishments, though strong and specious, should not prevent him, as a judge, from doing his duty, as prescribed by the laws; and that, accordingly, he should pass sentence on him. "If jurymen and judges were to yield to such reasoning, and acquit the guilty offender,

or

or refuse to condemn him, what," he said, "would become of society? The worst of evils would ensue—confusion, disorder, anarchy, and perhaps revolution; evils much greater than that of robbing the community of a vicious member.

"*You, Theodore Dalbert, therefore,*" continued he, "*shall be taken to the gaol of Abingdon, from whence you came, and from thence, on Monday next, to the place of execution, and there hanged by the neck until you be dead, and afterwards your body is to be dissected and anatomized. May God, of his infinite mercy, receive your soul!*"

Theodore was conveyed back immediately to gaol; and, as his fate was no longer uncertain, his native fortitude prevailed, and restored to him all his calmness. He slept well that night, and the next morning, having dressed himself in black,

he sat down, at an early hour, to write to Miss Bolton. He had now purchased the luxury of candles, requisite, even in the daytime, in his gloomy dungeon, and the use of a bed, a chair, a table, and writing materials. For these, and the privilege of having his hands and feet unconfined, he paid the gaoler forty pounds. Previous to his trial, his agitation had rendered him, in a great degree, insensible to his present wants, and by a strange incongruity, until he lost all hope, he sought no comfort. He had just begun his letter, when he was disturbed by the loud and alarming sound of some one opening the doors of his cell. These were two in number, and placed in a small door-way that passed through a stone wall of eight feet in thickness. Each of them was plated with iron, and fastened by a chain, a massy bar, and three immense locks.

locks. He laid aside his paper, and looked up. "You must stoop, Ma'am, as you enter this cell," said the turnkey. "There," added he, "you see your man." It was Miss Bolton.

Theodore started up. His graceful figure but ill accorded with the wretchedness of his dungeon. A glow of gratitude and joy overspread his face. "Dearest Miss Bolton, is it you? can it be possible? what do I not owe you for this visit? what unparalleled goodness and humanity are yours? But you are alarmed and unwell. Will you sit upon this chair?" The man who had conducted her in now retired, telling her that it was permitted to none but the clergyman to remain longer than a quarter of an hour. On quitting the cell he fastened the two doors after him.

Julia, heaving a profound sigh, threw

herself on the chair, rested one arm on the table, and extended the other to her unfortunate preceptor. He knelt by her side, and kissing her hand with unutterable tenderness, hoped that *she* did not believe him guilty. "Let me," said he, "believe that in you, at least, I see a friend who thinks me innocent."—"Oh Theodore! is it thus I meet you? Would to Heaven you had never seen me! then might you have escaped this dreadful situation. Believe you innocent? Ah! could I think *you* guilty of my father's death? you whom I love, you by whom I am loved?" The gentleness of her manner and the sweetness of her voice received, at this moment, an interest from her terror and anxiety, and from her declaration of attachment, that brought a tear into his eye. It was a tear of tenderness, not imbecility. She never appeared so

amiable to him or so lovely. "But rise," added she, "this is not a moment to practise the submissions of gallantry. Here are a thousand pounds. Employ them to procure your escape, if escape be possible, or in any other way you please. You must not refuse this money. I have no use for it, and I am determined you shall keep it."—"Admirable girl! why cannot I return your goodness by a long life of devotion to your service? but," said he, rising, "it must not be! It were vain to seek to save a wretch whom fortune has deserted, and who must perish. Take back the money, escape is impossible, and if it were possible, should I in honour attempt it? To fly like a felon! No, no! take back the money, it must not be!"—"Oh!" cried Julia, bursting into tears, "did I want this to complete my misery? Theodore, if you do not wish to see

see me die at your feet, lay aside your haughtiness and your despair. Hope yet to live. Hope yet to call me yours. Keep the money, try to escape this night, and in the mean time, call me your wife, your true and loving wife."

"Adored and delightful Julia! Call you wife! That transporting word presents to my soul visions of endless bliss. Yes, I will live. I will try to escape. Give me the money, and pray for my success."—"Thank you—thank you—dearest Theodore—this is kind indeed. They will soon force me from you. I shall leave you in a horrible place, but let the remembrance of this embrace support you in my absence." With the eagerness of genuine love, Julia threw herself into the arms of her lover, and suffered her mouth to be pressed by his. For some minutes not even his

his misery could rouse him from the trance into which her action had thrown him. Soon, however, the noise of the turnkey's entrance announced the sad necessity of separation. Locked together in a mutual embrace, each viewed the other with a mixture of grief and rapture, and then again advanced their meeting lips, and again exchanged the ecstatick pressure and the very ravishment of love. How willingly, were it permitted her, would she not at this moment have exchanged situations with him, and have given her life to save his! But inevitable necessity forced her to part from him.

"Go, best, fairest, fondest of your sex," said he, "and think of a man who loves you with all a husband's tenderness, and with more than a lover's ardour." The gaoler having just entered, he added, that he

he had been writing to her when she entered, and that his letter should have been to entreat that she would extend her protection to his mother, and, with all possible expedition, convey to her an account of his horrible fate. Having promised to comply with these wishes, Julia, being pressed by the turnkey, departed, unable to speak, and with scarcely the power to walk.

As the man was retiring, Theodore told him that he wished to converse with him for a few minutes, and begged he would soon return. In an hour he appeared again. "My friend," said Theodore, "I shall not detain you long. You are, it seems to me, placed in a very unpleasant situation here. You are, in fact, yourself a prisoner, and but poorly paid, I fear, for enduring so much gloom and confinement, together with

with the contempt of the world. You have much authority in this prison, and it is in your power to effect my escape. Do this, and you shall have a thousand pounds sterling paid to you immediately, and a hundred a-year during your life. I will pay you the thousand pounds before I leave this cell, and I will bind myself here in writing to pay you the annuity regularly."—"Why, Sir, your offer is fair enough, and, do you see me? I agree to it. I know you are a gentleman, every inch of you, and, as you say, it is in my power to let you off. But I must be first sure of the thousand—do you comprehend? It's my way always."—"Then you promise to assist me in my escape, my worthy benefactor, my honest fellow!"—"I do promise, but on one condition howsomdever, that is to touch the shiners—do you take? to finger the

the mocuses, the brads, the shiners, the dust, the corianders, as a body may say."—" You shall have them. Here is one bank-note for a thousand pounds. Here, take it, and to your contrivance I commit my deliverance."—" Let me see, a thousand pounds—so it is, by my conscience! thank you, Sir; I'll take this money from you, as you have no use for it, and I wish you good-by, Sir."—" What! is it thus you treat me? Is it thus you act under our agreement?"—" What agreement is it you are bothering about? Sure you would not have me to join in jail-breaking? The thing is felony, and if once you got out, to the devil you'd pitch me, so the hundred a-year would be all in my eye, and my thousand might be taken from me, and myself confined for life in your place. No, no! my darling, you never will catch

Jemmy

Jemmy Philips at so young a trick as that neither. Besides, it would lie on my conscience to save a murderer from being hanged."—" Villain! lay down my thousand pounds immediately."—" Oh! none of your hoity toitys, my man, or we'll soon clap the darbys on you, the neat fetters and decent hand-cuffs, you know, and thumb-screws and neck-yokes, do you see me? Your servant, Sir. Good-by to you, my hearty. Oh! what a cake I wasn't!" —" Infernal miscreant! do you trifle with my misery? do you rob and then mock and abuse me? Merciless rascal! take this!" So saying, the prisoner aimed a blow at his head with an iron candlestick, that brought him to the earth speechless. Theodore instantly took from him the keys and thousand pounds, and having exchanged clothes with him, and locked him into the

the cell, proceeded with a beating heart through the prison, hoping to make his escape in this disguise.

He had already passed to the outer door, when the head-gaoler called out, "How, Jemmy, are you going out with the keys in your hand? Please to lay them by in their proper place in my room." The fictitious turnkey grew pale at these words, and knowing that if he turned about he must infallibly be detected, thought it better to attempt sudden flight; throwing down the keys, therefore, he hastily unbolted the door and ran out; but the alarm being given, he was pursued by the gaoler and his attendants. Not knowing the streets of Abingdon, he entered one where a house had lately fallen, and a crowd having been assembled at the same spot by some accident, he was compelled to stop, and his

his pursuers coming up, and calling him *murderer,* every one was inclined to assist them in his apprehension. Out of breath, but in a state of excessive desperation, he seized on a piece of timber, part of the ruined house, and with it attacked his enemies. He had knocked down six, made the greater part of the remainder retreat, and was preparing to continue his flight, when a stone, flung by the gaoler, struck him on the forehead, and deprived him of all sense and motion. He was brought, or rather dragged, back to the gaol, and abused, on his way thither, with innumerable indignities and blows. Conveyed a second time to his dungeon, he was loaded with an unexampled weight of irons, and left on the bare stones to perish or live, as chance might direct, till the hour of his execution

should

should arrive. But his pockets were first emptied of their contents.

Julia, meanwhile, had, the moment she had parted from him, set out for Windsor, whither she travelled with as much expedition as English posting, with four horses, would permit. Ellen attended her. Her intention was to apply for a pardon for Theodore. Colonel Tennant, one of the equerries, and who was likewise her cousin, readily undertook to procure for her an opportunity of making the application.

The King was taking his evening walk on the Terrace, when she advanced towards him. Her dress was disordered, her hair dishevelled, her face pale, her manner and her motions hurried, eager, and agitated. Having been at Court three or four times, she was not unknown to his Majesty, who, seeing

seeing her approach at a distance, and, being told her name, walked a few steps to meet her, and endeavoured, in vain, to prevent her from throwing herself at his feet. "Miss Bolton, pray don't kneel on the ground," said he, in the kindest and most affable manner. "I condole with you sincerely on your father's unhappy fate, and I shall be happy to do any thing that may alleviate your misfortune. But, prithee, rise."

"Sire, an unfortunate, innocent man is to suffer to-morrow at Abingdon. Mercy, mercy! At your knees I must remain till I know his doom."—"To-morrow—who is he?"—"Theodore Dalbert."—"What! the murderer of your father?"—"He has been condemned as such, but he is innocent. Some malignant demon, envious of his goodness, has contrived to overwhelm the most

most virtuous of mankind with apparent guilt. To you, Sire, he sends. Spare his life, great King! oh spare an innocent life!"

There was a softness as well as energy in her address, that gave to her words much of the power of persuasion. The music of her voice received from her immoderate grief a pathos that touched all the finer strings of the heart. A shower of tears completed the interesting expression of her sorrow.

"Miss Bolton, you must rise, indeed you must—your request is a serious one. The case of Theodore Dalbert, his trial and his condemnation, I have already learned, by express, from Baron Kellet, who presided at Abingdon, and I am sorry, very sorry, to say that I think my duty as a man, my honour as a sovereign, and my conscience

conscience as a Christian, all forbid the exercise of my prerogative on this occasion. It is the lot of kings to appear to have most power when they are in truth the least independent. How willingly would I grant your petition! How reluctant am I to refuse it! How difficult is it to deny you any favour! but I cannot interpose between the laws and Dalbert. No circumstance of extenuation, I understand, appeared on the trial, and no doubt of his guilt is entertained by the judge. Under these circumstances, how could I excuse my mistaken clemency, to the relatives of all those who have suffered, during my reign, for crimes infinitely less atrocious than his, and who were convicted on evidence infinitely less conclusive than that which was produced against him? I regret, therefore, Miss Bolton, to say that the law

must take its course. But, how are you his advocate? you, whom he has injured irreparably?"

Julia could not answer. Her hopes were blasted; despair usurped their place, and, no longer capable of resisting the effects of fatigue, hurry, grief, and anxiety, she sunk into the arms of the attendants. His Majesty ordered every possible care to be taken of her, had her conveyed into a chamber of the palace, and sent for his own physician to attend her.

On the following day, at one o'clock, Theodore, with a rope round his neck, and a fillet round his wounded forehead, was led to the front of the gaol by the executioner. His hands were tied behind his back, and Father Lanesby and the sheriff attended him. His countenance was severe and his step firm. The rope having been passed

passed over a pulley in the gallows, he begged to know if he might speak. The sheriff answered in the affirmative. The place was crowded with a multitude of people, whom the convict then addressed in these words:

"You who are assembled on this melancholy occasion, perhaps think me guilty and abhor me. But the hour will arrive when you will learn my innocence and pity me. People of Abingdon, I am innocent. I am prepared to die; and I look at all these preparations for my death without terror. But I confess I cannot think of the shock that my aged parent will receive, when she shall hear of my execution, without feeling a dreadful pang. But God's will be done! I forgive all my enemies. At the moment of my departure for the world of spirits, I would not let a falsehood

defile my lips, and, with my dying breath, I now repeat that I am innocent. So help me, Jesus!"

He now dropped a handkerchief, the signal for the executioner to lower the cap and terminate the tragic scene. The pangs of death, for a few minutes, convulsed his limbs; for a few minutes only, and then all appearance of life completely vanished.

Among the immense crowd that was assembled a universal and perfect stillness prevailed. The lowest sound that had escaped him had been heard with awful distinctness by the remotest of the multitude. Every eye was fixed on the swinging body, and every heart beat with pity or anxiety. Not thicker, on the sea-shore, are the stones, rolled by the tide, than seemed the faces directed toward the now inanimate

Theodore. He was a fearful spectacle. It was a terrible and tremendous scene.

A faint murmur, like the low echo of a distant tumult, is heard. It is obscure, but it disturbs the silent solemnity that prevails. It grows in the wind. It swells upon the ear. It becomes articulate. The words, "Mr. Bolton!"—Alive!"—"Make way!"—"'Tis he!"—"What?"—"Hush!"—"No!" can be distinguished. The swarming mass of life, the incorporated thousands, till now motionless, seem to stir. Some strange or terrifying cause has produced so sudden and remarkable an effect. The noise increases; the agitation spreads. What can that be which rushes through the crowd? It occupies a small circular space, and that space seems to fly through the congregated multitude! So, when in northern latitudes, a grampus, wandering

amid the deep, encounters and penetrates a herring-shoal, filling leagues upon leagues with its migratory millions; impatient of the interminable throng, he pursues his quickened course to the south, but is still surrounded on every side by an ever-changing mass of moving myriads.

At length the cause of this agitation in the crowd appears: a man on horseback is seen galloping at the top of his speed towards the gaol. "A reprieve! a reprieve!" is shouted from mouth to mouth: "A reprieve! a reprieve!" is echoed by the surrounding hills. The man flies to the fatal tree, throws himself from his horse, cries "Save him! save him!" and then falls speechless.

It is Mr. Bolton! he that had been believed to be murdered, it is he himself! "How is this?" said the sheriff. "Surely this

this is Mr. Bolton. Instantly cut down the man. There is some strange and wonderful secret in this affair." Theodore was cut down and liberated from the rope, and brought, together with Mr. Bolton, into the gaol. All proper means were employed for each. Mr. Bolton in a short time revived; but it was an hour before Theodore shewed signs of animation. By bleeding in the jugular vein, and other remedies, he was, however, gradually recovered.

"Oh, Theodore!" said the good man, "what horrors have you not endured! but I am not to blame. You will think so when I explain this mystery. About two months ago, I received a letter from Plymouth from my only brother. He had been compelled to fly from England, when a young man, for his reprobate conduct, and I thought he had been dead for many years.

He represented himself as suffering under the most urgent distress, and even in want of food and raiment. By the return of the post I remitted him a bill for one hundred pounds, and I sent him, by the mail-coach, a complete suit of my clothes. In a week afterwards I received another from him, informing me that he had lost the hundred pounds at a gaming-table, and demanding a further remittance. This letter I did not answer. The robber, that was shot accidentally in the shrubbery, was this brother, who, as it was my practice to walk out at night alone, had, doubtless, expected to meet me unprotected. As he wore my clothes, as his figure resembled mine, and as part of his face had been shot away, it is no wonder that his body was thought to be mine."

Mr. Bolton added, that he had consented to

the secret burial of the body, from his dread of the disgrace that would attend a discovery of it; and that he had not stopped in Newbury that night, in consequence of his extreme agitation, which took from him all self-possession, and disinclined him entirely to rest; that he had, therefore, walked on to Great Bedwin, which was a town still nearer to General Dalbert's residence, and in which town he was not known, and where, for want of his *valise*, he was obliged to purchase some articles of dress; that he had not intended to go to London, but had spoken of a journey thither, in order to conceal from the young couple his visit to the General, with the successful result of which he wished to surprise them; and that having, that very morning, at breakfast with the General, seen, by mere accident, in a provincial

paper, an account of the trial, he had immediately mounted a fleet hunter, and galloped to Abingdon.

"And now," said he, "I feel not only the indescribable happiness of having saved your life, but I have the pleasure to assure you of your grandfather's protection, who has consented to settle on you an estate of three thousand pounds a-year, provided Julia will consent to marry you. Her fortune is, you know, twenty thousand pounds."

Theodore could make no reply. The agony of mind and body he had so lately suffered, and the transport he now felt, deprived him of utterance, and he could only throw himself into the arms of his worthy benefactor.

When it was dark they left Abingdon, (Theodore having got back the thousand pounds);

pounds); and they proceeded to Bolton-hall, where, in a few days, they were joined by Julia and General Dalbert.

The General had now attained his grand climacterick. At fifteen a commission had been purchased for him, and in thirty years he had been able to retire with a fortune of forty thousand pounds sterling. His paternal estate of Holtham produced three thousand *per annum*; and, within the eighteen years which had elapsed since his retiring from the army until the present period, he had accumulated a considerable accession to his wealth. When young he had been handsome, and he still retained some traces of strength and beauty. His manners were plain, and his conversation was unadorned, but in all that he did and said, there was a certain air of dignity, that gentlemanly something, which men of

good birth, and accustomed from their infancy to good company, are often found to possess. His disposition was cholerick to an extreme, and this fault, by early, and long command in the army, had become an unconquerable, and, to many, an intolerable vice. He was, nevertheless, kind and compassionate, and by all to whom the General was known, he was considered a hasty, but a hospitable, honest, friendly character. He had hardly seen Theodore when he felt for him the affection of a parent; and in a few days the old man was proud to declare, that, in his grandson, he saw the first of the Dalberts.

CHAP. II.

I will sooner trust a crocodile,
When he sheds tears; for he kills suddenly,
And ends our cares at once; or any thing
That's evil to our nature, than a man.

.....

Methinks, already in some barbarous isle,
Like a benighted traveller, I stand,
Viewing with wat'ry eyes the sinking sun,
And night displaying her sad ensigns round:
No friendly visage near me, all before
A horrid maze of death; without a hope
Of help or of escape. Despair, darkness,
Death, and everlasting horror round me.

.....

Dans des antres profonds on a sou renfermer
Des foudres souterrains tous prêts à s' allumer.

The miscreant who had attempted to drown Theodore, was he who lost his life in the shrubbery at Bolton-hall, the execrable brother of the respected and worthy Mr. Bolton.

Mr. Bolton and his wretched brother, who was a year younger than he, were the

only children of the famous Colonel Bolton, who, in his time, had been the most noted gamester in England. Their mother died when they were infants, and their father neglected them. Committed to the care of mercenary attendants, the two boys grew as nature and chance directed. The elder was mild and docile, but Edward, on the contrary, was sulky and mischievous. His associates were gipsies and jockies, and at the age of twelve there were few of the vices of low debauchery with which he was unacquainted, and none to which he did not incline. Even then he was often intoxicated with ardent spirits, and it frequently happened, that by the scientific shuffling of cards, he won the wages of his father's servants. At the age of sixteen he was a rake, and at eighteen a notorious swindler.

About this period, having defrauded a tradesman in London of some money, he was apprehended and committed to jail, from which Colonel Bolton, with considerable difficulty, had him released. After this, being poor, and shunned by all the world, he was glad to accept of a situation under the Hudson's Bay Company, obtained for him by his father. But industry was too foreign to his nature, and the seeds of dissipation, extravagance and debauchery were too deeply sunk in his corrupt heart, to permit him to apply long to any honest employment. Having committed as many frauds as it was possible to practise in his new situation, he fled into the United States of America, where he got acquainted with a family of the name of Harold. Miss Harold, being pretty, received much of his attentions, but as he had a rooted aversion

to

to matrimony, she soon discovered that she was not to be Mrs. Bolton. She was long impatient of celibacy, and this new disappointment exasperated her to fury. She complained to her brother of the base man who had, she said, engaged her affections without any intention to marry her. "Why," urged she, "should he gain my love when he himself was indifferent? Such conduct is dishonourable and ungentlemanly, and the credit of our family and my happiness demand that you should horsewhip him." The brother was as violent and unreasonable as the sister, and he actually carried her wishes into effect. The other, who always carried pistols, shot his assailant in the neck; and, immediately afterwards, thinking he had killed him, though in this he was mistaken, departed for the Spanish territory in the south.

The

The vigilance and strictness of this government not according well with the laxity of his principles, he, in a few months, took his passage for Cadiz. There he associated with cheats and sharpers, and passed rapidly through many of the gradations of rascality. Grown bold from practice, and desperate from necessity and danger, he next became a bravo and an assassin. As such he travelled into Italy and France, and as such he became acquainted with Gaspar Pontgebre. From him he had received a considerable sum of money for the murder of Theodore, of whose death, by drowning, he had brought to Bourdeaux satisfying proofs. A run of bad luck at play had stripped him, in a few nights, of his ill-gotten gold; and, as had often happened to him before, distress and hunger approached sufficiently near to be seen

and

and felt by him. Under the pressure of urgent want he thought of his brother, and determined to practise on his benevolence. With this view he returned to England, where he met, from the hand of Theodore, a fate that he had long deserved.

Theodore was still unwell. It was necessary, therefore, to delay the intended marriage; but the General, in contemplation of it, settled on his grandson three thousand pounds a-year. The old gentleman determined that the wedding should take place in a few days, and Mr. Bolton and Theodore purposed to return, immediately after the ceremony, to France. To live in England, after what had happened, would be to expose themselves to perpetual mortifications, and it never occurred to them that Julia could have any objection to the removal. They were all perfectly

happy

happy except her. She, without any apparent cause, was absent in her manner and pensive; and, as the day approached that was to see her united to the only man she had ever loved, her dejection increased. Her father considered this as the effect of maidenly timidity, and of the horrid events that had lately happened; but Theodore, more discerning, penetrated further into her mind, and ascertained the existence of some hidden grief.

One morning that she was sitting with him in the summer-house, he took one of her hands in his, and begged, with tender anxiety, to know what it was that caused her melancholy. "No impertinent motive prompts me," said he, "to make the inquiry; but my happiness is now connected with yours, we shall soon have only one interest, and therefore, even now perhaps it

it is my duty, as it certainly is my inclination, to participate in your sorrows." She blushed—a tear trembled in her eye, and a general agitation disturbed her frame. "Theodore, a secret lies concealed in this bosom. It preys incessantly upon my spirits, and that which should contribute most to my happiness—a union with you, but aggravates my distress." Theodore fixed his eyes on her with astonishment. "You may well be amazed," continued she, "but your honour forbids a longer silence on a subject which I shudder to disclose." The look with which he viewed her, as she uttered these words, beggars description. "The wife of Theodore Dalbert," proceeded she, "should be not only perfectly unsullied, but should have ever been beyond the defilement of aspersion. No human being should be able to say of her—

'That

'That is she whose innocence I doubt.' But, alas! such a wife, perhaps, I should not be."

Her sighs and sobs interrupted her utterance, and it was only by broken words and disjointed sentences that she conveyed to Theodore the tale of that fatal night at the *chateau*, and the horrible misfortune of *Mademoiselle de Sagoné*. As she spoke she hid her burning face behind his neck, while she rested her hands upon one of his shoulders. "That misfortune," said she, "was intended for me, and it is to the goodness of Providence that I am indebted for my preservation."—"Could I have supposed," returned Theodore, "that my affection for you was capable of increase, my dearest, my beloved Julia, your present narration was wanted to make my passion perfect; but seek not to improve it

it further, or I shall expire from excess of love. Come to my arms, fairest—chastest creature, and re-assure me that you will be mine."

Her light and elastic figure, by a magical movement, was instantaneously placed upon his lap. She sunk her head upon his bosom in gentle agitation; a sigh from his heart came warm on her cheek; its odour was the freshness of health; its lengthened cadence was the eloquence of love. "Banish from your mind, my Julia, all recollection of this terrible occurrence. I lament it because it has made you unhappy, but it has not lessened my esteem for your virtues, my confidence in your goodness. What you have communicated to me has awakened a new interest in my bosom, which, joined with my admiration of your candour and your delicacy, has exalted

exalted my passion for you almost to idolatry. Believe me, love, the intrinsic virtue of your friend, the unfortunate *Mademoiselle de Sagoné,* received not the slightest stain. What is chastity? Not a dubious distinction—not the ignorant idol of barbarians or debauchees—not the vain virginity of visionary vestals, but that mental immaculateness—that intellectual fidelity—that modesty of disposition and unchangeable devotedness to one preferred object, which philosophy approves, morality teaches, and religion sanctifies. But come, chace from that lovely brow those little clouds of uneasy recollection, and let us speak of our approaching wedding. My wife you will soon be, and never, Julia, never while we live, shall I love you less than I do now."

Julia raised her head. No human felicity could

could exceed that which she enjoyed at this moment. Pleasure, too abundant to be concealed, sparkled in her eyes. She could not speak, but her lips involuntarily approached his. Pressed to his heart with fond violence, she received and returned the sweetest of kisses; and yielding gently to his legitimated ardour, moderated as it was by delicacy and respect, closed her beauteous eyes in timid and blissful perturbation.

On their return to the house, Theodore received a letter from France. It announced the expected death of his mother, and conveyed to him her wish to see him before she should depart from this world. The intelligence affected him extremely, and as his affection for her was unbounded, he determined to set off that evening for Dover, and to postpone his marriage until he should

should meet Julia in France. She and her father agreed to this arrangement. He departed from Bolton-hall in a few hours, they followed him in four days. The General returned home. Theodore, though he used all possible expedition, did not, however, receive his mother's last breath. She had been buried three days before he arrived in Bourdeaux.

The *Comte D'Egfryd* still lived at the *Chateau de St. Uldrich*, and was still loved and respected. Strange to relate! the apprehension of *Marie de Solase* had not publicly exposed any of his villainy. She, it is true, had, before her execution, told the turnkey who guarded her, in answer to some questions put by him, the mode of her escape from justice, and her retreat in *the grave*, procured for her, as she said, by the Count. But in this, the brutish

and profligate gaoler discovered nothing worthy of censure or of repetition. It therefore had not transpired. From the want of time, or strength, or recollection, she had, luckily for the Count, uttered no formal denunciation against him, and therefore he continued to enjoy and to abuse the confidence of the world. He possessed extensive popularity, but he persevered in all his accustomed vices. Gaspar Pontgebre and Pierre Dontache, he who had seduced Theodore from the *chateau*, under the pretence of a message from his mother, were still the instruments of his iniquity. He had been preserved from the poisoned tokay by an accident that had happened on the road to the case containing it, the consequence of which accident was that both the bottles had been broken. By Marie's death, one of the four persons who

who could criminate him was removed, and the destruction of the other three now occupied all his thoughts. Those three were, Mr. Bolton, Julia, and Theodore.

Accustomed to state and magnificence from his infancy, and profuse from disposition as well as habit, he required, and had always possessed a princely fortune; and if he had been compelled to chuse death or pecuniary distress, he would not have hesitated to prefer the former. To such a man the prospect of poverty has greater terrors than those can conceive whose wants are few and simple, and who are accustomed to earn their subsistence by the unremitted exercise of industry. The remotest probability of having a wish which he could not afford to gratify, or being applied to for a debt which he might not have the ability to discharge, would fill

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the mind of such a man with grief and anxiety; but what must have been the tortures of the Count on the rack of insolvency itself?

Shortly after the providential discovery of the cavern by means of the goldfinch, judgment had been pronounced against him in a lawsuit of thirty years standing, and which involved the greater part of his paternal inheritance. By this judgment he was compelled not only to deliver up the possession of the estates in dispute, but to pay, within twelve months, the accumulated arrears of the rent for fifty years. For this purpose he was obliged to mortgage the remainder of his property; and, having paid the arrears, he found, that instead of eight hundred thousand livres* of rent per annum, he was reduced to ninety thousand livres

* About 40,000l. sterling.

livres* per annum; but it was not permitted by his pride to make any retrenchment.

"What!" it is probable he thought, "have I divested myself of all prejudice; am I possessed of coolness, craft, caution, and contrivance; do I love only myself, and hate or despise the whole world besides—all to no end? In society there is a perpetual struggle between the few who seek to monopolize riches and power, and the many who wish to wrest from their oppressors a portion of their superfluities. The needy wretch, who, obeying the voice of nature, endeavours to relieve his distress by seizing on a part of the property of his tyrants, is hanged for his crime, as it is called, and it is fit he should be executed. I, as one of the privileged order, am inter-

* About 4,500l. sterling.

ested in supporting their authority, and defending their despotism and their luxuries. What are the sufferings of others to me? My comforts and my pleasures demand slaves, and are protected by laws, judges, gallies, gibbets. These, therefore, have my support. But why is he hanged? Because he is needy, because he is ignorant, because he is timorous, because he is stupid. His imbecility demands the aid of a confederate, and that confederate, for a reward, betrays him. His prejudice, which he has been taught to consider as the supernatural warning of conscience, makes him tremble at the thought of removing any one of his enemies, and at that of relieving any of his wants; and, to the dread of the executioner is added, in his mind, the insensate and fanatic horror of everlasting torments. His poverty forbids the

the expensive instrumentality of prompt desperation and blind obedience; his stupidity allows him neither foresight, invention, nor ingenuity; and his ignorance exposes him, at every step, to the danger of falling into some of the numberless ambuscades that experience, cruelty, and avarice have placed round property, exclusive and forbidden by the laws, though, by right, common to all mankind. But shall *I* cast a longing look at this inviolable treasure and not be gratified? Shall *I* want a portion of it and not obtain it? No; it suffices for me to know that there is wealth and I stand in need of it, and I will possess it. Yes, I will possess it, without incurring either danger or suspicion, although it should be guarded by all the terrors that cunning can devise, fear suggest, or power employ."

But I return to Mr. and Miss Bolton, who had now arrived in France. They travelled unattended by any servants. These and their heavy luggage were to follow them. Without hurrying themselves on their journey, they proceeded with uniform diligence through the provinces of Artois, Picardy, Isle de France, Orleannois, Touraine, Poitou and Angoumois, towards Bourdeaux. But, previous to Mr. Bolton's departure from England, he received the following letter from Father Lanesby.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"You have heard, to be sure, of the severe complaint with which it has pleased God to afflict Mr. Alcot; but he is now better, and the physicians are

are not without hopes of his recovery. He sent for me yesterday, in order to make a confession to me, which, he said, regarded your family materially.

"I attended him, and found him absolutely in a state of despair. 'Mr. Lanesby,' he began, 'I am the basest and wickedest of men, and I cannot die in peace without repairing, as much as in my power, by an ample confession, the greatest crime that was perhaps ever committed against an innocent man. What I tell you, Sir, you may repeat. I well deserve reproach, abhorrence, and humiliation. Mr. Dalbert's innocence, that is now proved to all the world, was known to me, Sir, from the first. In the pocket of the deceased, I found a letter which I suppressed. It was from Mr. Bolton, and I learned by it that the person killed was his brother, and that

this person's conduct had been reprobate. In short, Sir, I had a conviction on my mind of Mr. Dalbert's innocence when he was apprehended, and of the truth of his declarations on both the trials. It was in my power, by a word, to save him at Abingdon, for, exclusive of the letter, I had the day before seen Mr. Bolton in the demesne at Holtham, as I rode along the high road. Notwithstanding this, I attended and assisted at the prosecution; and I heard the capital conviction of the unfortunate prisoner, not only without remorse, but with satisfaction. A malignant envy was the hellish passion that extinguished my humanity; but now, that death threatens to snatch me to a place of everlasting punishment, the agony and terror of my mind cannot be described.'

"I need not tell you, my worthy friend, that

that I was much shocked at this confession; but I felt, at the same time, pity for the unhappy man who had been guilty of such inveterate and unparalleled baseness. I said to him every thing that I thought could relieve the torments of his conscience, and finally I succeeded in restoring him to a state of comparative composure. I have seized the earliest moment of complying with his wishes, and I pray you and Theodore to forgive him. He is at this moment an object of compassion and of pardon. May Heaven have you and my amiable young friend in its holy keeping evermore! Amen. WM. LANESBY."

Mr. Bolton had shown this letter to Theodore and his daughter. They all

shuddered at such unprovoked atrocity, but they forgave the wicked Mr. Alcot, and even prayed for his recovery. He did recover, but during the remainder of his life he was an object of contempt and hatred.

Mr. Bolton and Julia proceeded, as I have said, on their journey to Bourdeaux by easy stages. Approaching the town of Cognac, they were struck with admiration by the beauties of the surrounding country. On one side was a deep declivity covered with wood, at the bottom of which flowed the *Charente* in a serpentine course, between enamelled borders, and on the other, an abrupt and rocky hill ascended to the clouds. The distant prospect afforded to the view many objects, picturesque or beautiful, such as mills, hamlets,

lets, and vineyards; cottages, boats, and plantations. All courted observation, and invited inquiry, while the distant spire of Cognac promised, by grateful association, a good supper and sound repose.

"How happy is a country life!" said Julia. "Blessed with health and competence, who would desert the quiet security of innocence and simplicity for the tumult and perils of a city? Look at that snug little cottage among the trees, with the column of smoke rising from its chimney, and its vineyard so nearly planted on the left. My imagination pictures its inhabitants. It is occupied by a young couple who have fondly quitted the world to enjoy a little paradise of their own formation. She is young, pretty, modest, intelligent, and interesting; and he, manly, sensible, vigorous, and active. Each lives

in

in the other, and both are but one. Anxious to please, she seeks no dominion but that of happiness. The sovereign of his soul, she holds her sceptre—the sceptre of affection, with propriety and grace; but her empire extends no further than the limits of their farm, and her only subject is her husband. She is his queen. He repines not at her power; he sighs not for liberty. Her power is that of virtuous love, and it were death to him to diminish it. A little prattler already emulates her mother's sweetness. It connects the fond pair by a new and sacred tie; and parental tenderness completes the amiable character of each."

Mr. Bolton was pleased with his daughter's sketch, and smiled.

From the high road a narrow rough alley led down the declivity towards the river.

river. Into this alley the driver suddenly whipped his horses. Mr. Bolton called out to him to know what he meant by doing so, and, receiving no answer, told him, in a loud and resolute tone, that if he did not instantly return to the high road he would shoot him. It was manifest that some treachery or violence was intended. The man turned about his head at the menace and laughed. Provoked to the last degree by such audacity, Mr. Bolton cocked and snapped one of his pistols at the fellow, but it missed fire; and on examination he found that the flints had been taken out of them. Pierre Dontache was the driver, and death, or worse than death, was connected with Pierre Dontache.

Meanwhile the horses were driven in full gallop down the hill, which, from its steepness,

ness, and the rough state of the road rendered the situation of the travellers in no common degree dangerous, and prevented the possibility of their jumping out. Their rapid course was continued to a wooden bridge that had been thrown over the river, and this being crossed, the horses were urged with increased velocity along the water's edge until they came to a little creek, wherein was a boat guarded by two men. The creek was opposite to a romantic island that lay in the middle of the river. The carriage stopped, and, with imprecations and force, Pierre, assisted by the two men, compelled the father and daughter to enter the boat. She was speechless and almost inanimate from terror. He was at once irritated and alarmed. They, with the luggage, were immediately rowed

rowed to the island, and the carriage was soon driven by Pierre out of sight.

The boatmen were two of five outlawed smugglers hired by Gaspar Pontgebre, and paid largely for executing his orders. These, though given by him, originated with the Count, who, on the supposition that Mr. Bolton would have been attended by his servants, had calculated that the assistance of five ruffians might be necessary. An old woman, whose name was Garquine, and the wife of one of them, was their cook. The island on which they resided might be about half a mile in circumference, and it was called the *Isle de Peine.* On it was a ruined monastery which served to shelter these desperadoes. In about forty minutes the travellers were landed, and the boat securely moored.

To the questions of Mr. Bolton no reply was

was made. On the illness and distress of Julia no attention was bestowed. They moved on, the two men carrying the luggage, in suspicious and gloomy silence, towards the ruins, now forcing their feet through the matted brambles which choked the ancient avenue, and again clambering over some of the parapets that had fallen to the ground. At length they gained the gateless entrance of a venerable ivy-covered pile, and proceeded to what had been the refectory. There the other three ruffians and the old woman were sitting round a fire of wood.

The sun was set about a quarter of an hour, and there was therefore scarcely any light but what proceeded from the blaze on the hearth. Such a group and such an apartment would have suited the taste of John de Laer, and demanded the pencil of

of Lucas of Leyden—their faces fierce and squalid, their dresses gaudy and ragged, their figures mean and exotic, and their uncouth looks expressive of fearful anxiety and habitual desperation. The room was spacious, arched, and lofty, but time had torn away the windows, the stucco, much of the plaister, and a little of the floor. A sooty yellow stained the walls and the ceiling. There was no door, nor was there any furniture save a gridiron, an iron pot, and two forms. But there is in heat and light a virtue that subdues desolateness, and gilds even poverty. The flaming faggots diffused a portion of cheerfulness over this misery; and had not Julia been a prisoner among banditti, she could have found something here to approve.

"So please you, gentlefolks," said one of the men, "don't be alarmed; no danger will happen

happen to you here; you shall have plenty to eat and drink, and beds likewise. Besides, you will have the liberty of walking about the island, and if you feel yourselves hungry now, we have a little fish and some bread and milk at your service. Though you be in the *Isle de Peine*, you shan't be starved neither." The travellers felt no inclination to eat, and having requested to be shown to their beds, Garquine lighted two small candles, with which she conducted them through the edifice. It was dismantled and ruinous in every part. The staircases, which were of stone, were filthy, broken, and slippery. There were no balusters, and the small number of the narrow casement-windows, that had not been removed, were broken. Having entered a corridor that was damp, dirty, and decayed, the old woman pointed out to Mr. Bolton

Bolton a room without a door, which, she said, was allotted for him.

She gave him one of the candles, and was proceeding still further in order to light Julia to her room, when this affectionate daughter threw herself into her father's arms. "Had not I better remain with you here all night, Sir?" said she. "You will be very comfortless in such a place as this by yourself; allow me to stay with you."—"Your room is up higher," grumbled Garquine. "There is no use in opposing our fate," cried the good man, "Good night, my dear, I hope to see you in the morning." He then entered the doorless chamber, and waited not for a reply. Julia followed Garquine till she came to a low oaken door at the top of the building. The door was too strong and heavy to be removed without much difficulty,

difficulty, or it would, doubtless, have been carried away with the others. "This is your room," said the old woman, entering it with a candle. It was arched at top; the floor was stone-work; there were two loop-holes for windows, and it forcibly suggested the idea of a place of confinement. It was in truth a most dismal recess.

A rude bedstead, a *paillasse*, and some bed-clothes were its chief articles of coarse convenience. "This is your room," repeated Garquine. Julia looked at her, and raised her eyes to Heaven.

Garquine, who presented the appearance of incorrigible termagancy and extraordinary robustness, was, notwithstanding a stoop, nearly six feet high, and she was about sixty years of age. Her limbs were slender to an excess, but hers was the slenderness of indefatigable action. Her shoulders were

were broad and elevated; her arms long, red, rough, and hairy, and her hands, feet, and head enormously disproportioned; her legs were bowed, naked and discoloured; her neck was long and scraggy; her hair wiry, short, matted, grey, and foul; and her voice discordant, loud, inarticulate, and abrupt; her eyes were large, white, staring, and far removed each from the other; her nose was cocked and crooked, and her mouth was of a prodigious extent; the under lip touched her nostrils; her waist was large; her chest was flat; her skin had the hue of dirty copper; her forehead was low and projecting. She never walked; a trot was her gait; her look was savage; and, in short, her every motion, her every sound, her every feature, was not only rude and rustic, but ferocious and alarming.

"'Tis very well," said Julia, surveying her

her guide with horror, "as this is my room I will not trouble you any more. But how will you be able to go down without a candle?"—"Oh! I am used to the building, and I want no light."—"Well, then, I wish you good night, and I thank you."—"Oh! good night to you."

Julia, when alone, looked about for something to secure her door on the inside, and fortunately found a strong wooden bar behind the bed, with which she effectually guarded against intrusion. The next morning, at an early hour, she arose, after a short and uneasy sleep, and found, outside the door, her trunk, dressing-case, and writing-box. She went immediately to visit her father, but he was still lying on his miserable couch and asleep. His luggage had likewise been brought up. She walked gently to his bed, sat at his side, and

and watched till he should awake. In a few minutes he stirred and extended his arms to his daughter. She kissed his hands affectionately, dropped upon his bosom, and joined her cheek to his. With surprise and terror they talked over their adventure; and it was soon determined by them, that, as soon as he should rise, they should inspect the situation of their prison. She returned into the corridor until he dressed himself, and then they proceeded to examine their ruinous habitation and the island.

The sun had just risen. It was the month of September, and all was involved in sleep and stillness, when they found themselves beyond the dilapidated fabric. It was a massy and a picturesque object; but, as a human dwelling, it was abominable. It was impossible to connect the idea of com-

modiousness with it, and it seemed to totter on its foundations.

Mr. Bolton and Julia, in the hope of escaping, quickened their steps; but everywhere the island seemed encompassed by an impassable morass, on which a bird could scarcely stand, and through which no boat could be forced. The place where they had landed the evening before was the only spot in the whole circumference of the island that permitted a debarkation. It was the termination of a serpentine canal of rock. This canal, which was formed by nature, passed through the morass, and was always navigable, in consequence of the incessant agitation of the water forced into it by the current of the river. The morass was thus prevented from filling it. The canal, including all its windings, was nearly a mile in length, and nowhere more

twelve feet wide. One of its ends terminated in a small bason, where the boat had been moored, not far from the ruined monastery. The other end opened into the river, and beyond the morass. The upper surfaces of the sides of this canal were all under the water, and in some places at no less a depth than five feet. To call that a canal, the sides of which were always under water, may be considered a misapplication of the term; but it will be recollected that these sides, being of stone, stopped the growth of the morass, and therefore preserved an uninterrupted navigation.

From one of these sides, and near that end of the canal which entered the river, there arose a rude and narrow causeway of rock, which, widening and rising, advanced a considerable way through the morass, and

then terminated, by a gradual descent and diminution, in the midst of it. It was impossible to arrive at any part of the causeway, except by the canal; but it well repaid the trouble of visiting it by the natural curiosity it presented. This was a sloping cavity within it, which penetrated to an immense depth, and was both dry and spacious. The entrance to the cavity was within a few yards of the spot where the causeway was connected with the canal.

Julia and her father having ascertained the only way by which an escape could be attempted, thought to avail themselves of the absence of their gaolers, and to take the boat; but, to their grief and mortification, they found that it was fastened by a strong chain and a large lock, the key of which had been removed, together with the oars. Despairing, therefore, of being able to escape,

at

at least for the present, and placing all their reliance on Providence, they turned from the boat, and seeing a sheet of paper pasted against a rock near them, they advanced towards it, and read, in French, to the following effect:

"Inhabitants of the *Isle de Peine*, now eight in number, read this paper with care, and know that your existence depends on your obedience. Last night, after the arrival of the two prisoners here, twenty barrels of gunpowder were, by Gaspar Pontgebre and Pierre Dontache, deposited in the cavity beneath the causeway. Across that part of the canal which is nearest to it, a number of strings and rods have been, according to my directions, placed, each of which strings and rods communicates with a spring, on the slighest motion of which the mine will be blown, and thou-

sands of tons of rock will bury you all in instant and inevitable death. To navigate your boat, or swim from the island, through the canal into the river, must produce this tremendous effect. You will therefore remain here to obey the orders that shall from time to time be sent to you, and your wants shall be attended to.

"A rope, made heavy enough to sink in water, passes round a post, at the yellow cottage, on the left bank of the river, and round the stone pillar in front of your church-yard. To this rope, the ends of which have been spliced together, is tied a small water-proof vessel. In this vessel you will find my orders, and be supplied with necessaries; and in this vessel you will convey to me your letters. Every day, at twelve, let it be searched and returned to me. The strength of five men is

is more than sufficient to move it, though full, across the bottom of the river.

"The gunpowder I have mentioned is secured against dampness and surprise. No one can approach it but by the canal, and approach by that is instantaneous destruction. To prevent the possibility of your being blown up by the accident of any person entering the island, and, consequently, stirring the fatal spring, an immense stone, concealed by some bushes, is placed on the top of the causeway, in such a manner, as that any large body entering into the canal, will, by pressing against some ropes connected with the stone, cause it to fall with irresistible violence, and, by the death of the visitor, save you from the explosion of the powder, which would take place if he should advance a little further.

"All this was done last night by Gaspar

and his associate, with the assistance of three men, whom the former had brought from Bourdeaux for the purpose. I was a spectator of their work, though they did not see me. They observed my orders strictly, though they know me not; and now they are all dispersed and sent to remote places. Be obedient for a few weeks, and hope for liberation and reward. Let the two prisoners be taken care of.

"Outlaws! your desperation might prompt you to attempt some mode, not conceivable to me at this moment, of crossing the morass, and thus quitting the island; but know that information has, by my means, been given against, and a reward advertised for the discovery of each of you. My wrath would pursue you should you escape, my power would apprehend you. In vain you would fly from the one—in vain you

you would conceal yourselves from the other. Keep these lines in your recollection; to-morrow they will have vanished from this paper. If you neglect my orders you shall perish; and recollect that I shall be sometimes among you, though you shall never behold me."

"Oh!" cried Julia, "this is the work of that monster Egfryd. We are his prisoners; these are his creatures, and this is his island." Scarcely had she uttered these words, when Jacques Ferrau, one of the banditti, joined them. They were still looking at the infernal scroll. "What is this?" said he. "Have you so soon found out an amusement for yourselves? This is now some copy of verses, I warrant, on the island and your confinement; and very pretty they are, no doubt. I should be glad to read them, if I might take that li-

berty. Might I be allowed?" The father and daughter turned aside. Approaching nearer, Jacques perused the paper, and his colour changed as he read.

"Damnable villain!" muttered he, "Gaspar described you well. The devil himself could not have planned a blacker scheme. So, here we are, compelled by hunger and necessity to be your slaves! We cannot disobey; we cannot escape; no creature can approach us. We must do your hellish work, whatsoever it may be. You run no risk; we know you not; and when we shall be no longer useful, your security will, probably, demand the sacrifice of our lives, and we shall, perhaps, be all blown up. Oh! that you were now within my grasp, invisible, tremendous fiend!"—"But," said Mr. Bolton, interrupting him, "are you sure that there is no part of the morass

morass fordable?"—"Oh! God bless you, Sir! fordable! it would swallow a steeple; and it is so broad in every part——"—"Then the canal alone presents any mode of retreat?"—"The canal alone—why, to be sure, Sir; but who would dare to approach the further end? Even a man swimming would disturb some of those strings or rods, and blow up the whole island; and if the morass could be crossed, do you think we would venture to attempt it? No, the gallows too surely would await us on the other side. I heard enough from Gaspar Pontgebre, who paid us handsomely enough for coming here, of his secret master, to convince me that every word in that paper is true; and I would not, for all the register-ships that ever left Manilla, venture within ten yards of the causeway. What his designs are, time alone will show.

He is the prince of darkness, and our lives are not worth an hour's purchase while in his power. He says he will be sometimes among us, and I don't doubt it. He makes all nature bend to his purposes."

Julia laid her head on her father's bosom. "Ah! Miss," continued the fellow, "I pity you from my heart. I am not much given to compassion neither. But it is impossible to see so sweet a young lady in this terrible situation without feeling something; and, at this moment, damn me if I would not venture my life to save your's. While with my companions, I sometimes forget that I was once honest and virtuous; but I have my moments of bitter repentance."—"My good friend," replied Mr. Bolton, "I feel sincerely obliged to you, but it is in vain, from what you say, to look for any succour. To Heaven,

Heaven, therefore, be committed our deliverance!"

"You must have a terrible opinion of me, Sir," said Jacques, "seeing me in such a place, associated with such people, and married to such a wife, for I am the husband of Garquine; but I deserve at least as much pity as reproach. It is not four years since I was comfortably and respectably situated in Lyons. I carried on a stocking manufactory in that city. I was blessed with a gentle and affectionate spouse. I was the father of two lovely babes; and I enjoyed the confidence of my neighbours. But, unfortunately for me, a fatal passion took possession of my whole soul. This was the love of gaming; and the billiard-table had not only all my leisure hours, but also much of that time which should be devoted to my trade. At length

length the propensity grew so strong that I became inattentive to every thing else. My affairs fell into confusion, and, in the vain hope of retrieving them, I grew venturous in my bets, and, finally, desperate."

"I was soon declared a bankrupt, which, with my misconduct, had such an effect on my poor wife, that she fell sick, and died of a broken heart, and my children became a burden on the public. In this state of misery I revolved in my mind the most horrible modes of relief; and one evening, with a cocked pistol in my hand, my only remaining property, I robbed a gentleman near Lyons. I thought no one was near me; but Garquine, who kept a house for the reception of stolen goods near the spot, was a witness of the transaction from an adjoining field. She knew me, and, having overtaken me, demanded half

half my prize. I was forced to comply; and I went with her to her infamous abode. A reward was offered for my apprehension; and, under a threat to inform against me, she terrified me into a marriage with her.

"By her means I became acquainted with smugglers, robbers, and villains of every kind; and my love of gaming and my distress continuing, I never had the resolution nor the means to fly from her; and, crime following crime, and misfortune treading on misfortune, here I am at last, an outcast from society, and probably the victim of a greater delinquent than myself."

Just as Jacques had concluded, the other outlaws appeared, who, being made acquainted with the contents of the paper, joined in execrating the dark and wicked

monster

monster that governed them ; at the same time declaring, with the inconsistency of low dissipation and idle profligacy, that, provided their wants should continue to be supplied, they should not grumble at the confinement of a few weeks longer. They, nevertheless, felt respect for their two amiable prisoners, and did all that was in their power to alleviate their misery.

The father and daughter never separated except at night. They read, they wrote, they sang, they strolled, they conversed; and, were they not conscious of being in the power of Count Egfryd, they would not have been miserable. There were goats on the island. Upon the milk of those, and bread, they principally subsisted. Mr. Bolton kept the sheet of paper, but the writing on it disappeared in two days.

One

One of the bravoes had, in his youth, been a performer in pantomime. He was naturally a buffoon; and, upon no occasion, could he resign a certain dryness of humour, that often carried with it pleasantry and point. His education, besides, had not been so much neglected as that of the others. It chanced, on the third morning after the treachery and violence practised on Mr. Bolton and Julia, that the former spoke to this man. Among other matters he inquired about Gaspar Pontgebre. The account he received was in these words:

"The father of Gaspar Pontgebre, Sir, had been a cooper, and his mother a washer-woman in Milan. Despising the reflections of a censorious world, or too innocent and too tender to acknowledge any laws but those of love, the simple pair had

had neglected, or had forgotten, to celebrate their union with the ceremony of wedlock. Strangers to formality, and enemies to ostentation, they had plighted their troth, each to the other, in secret; and the only witness to the blushes of Giacobba, was the enamoured and sympathizing Raolo. Cupid, proud of the triumph over his rival Hymen, stole from him, as he slept, his crown and his torch. With the latter he lighted the conscious couch, while, from the former, he scattered over the happy lovers marjoram and roses.

"Raolo was a social and merry fellow. He could tell a story; he could crack a joke; he could sing a song. His companions liked him; he liked them; and they all liked wine; but neither they nor the wine could be enjoyed at home. He found it necessary, therefore, to absent himself,

himself, at times, from his beloved Giacobba and their little prattler Gaspar. The activity and curiosity of the child were admirable. His mother thought it a pity to impose the slightest restraint on him. He was, in consequence, accustomed from his infancy to ramble about the streets, thus acquiring a stock of health and ideas; for what invigorates the constitutions of children so much as constant exercise in the open air? what is so conducive to their mental improvement as a multitude of objects? This little darling, the pledge of his parents' love, possessed, among other qualities, a nimbleness of finger, and a quickness of eye, that often drew from his exulting father this pleasant remark—'I don't think that that little rascal will ever be hanged;' by which, while he conveyed his anxiety for his boy's future destiny, he

jocosely

jocosely insinuated that such talents and such dexterity, as the child possessed, would always preserve him from so ignominious a fate. Never was a creature so lucky in finding small articles as Gaspar was, and whatever he found, he, with filial affection, invariably carried to his mother. Pocket-handkerchiefs, it was observed, he was most successful in discovering, and seldom a day passed that he did not find one or two. As he advanced in years his talents became much improved and more valuable. Not only handkerchiefs, but tweezer-cases, gloves, snuff-boxes, hats, and watches, were obtained by his acute researches.

"The adventures of childhood are interesting, so far as they represent unperverted nature. At the age of eleven, passing through the streets, his eye happened to be caught, one evening, by the window of a jeweller's

jeweller's shop. Within a particular pane were several toys of great brilliancy. The inquisitive boy stopped. 'Oh!' thought he, 'if I had all those fine things now in my pocket, what a race should I not take to my mammy!' He looked, he sighed, he considered. It was evident to him, young and inexperienced as he was, that he could not go into the shop and take them away, for several reasons, one of which was, that there were three men attending it, who would probably be unwilling to dispose of the bawbles generously. How then are the pretty things to be obtained? why, by removing the pane; and how is that to be displaced? with this knife. Such was the simple train of his juvenile reasoning. The exclusive right to property is, you know, Sir, among the last principles that the youthful mind receives. It never occurred

to

to him (to what uneducated boy of his age would it occur?) that, in taking these trinkets, he would violate honesty and justice. These were abstract terms to which he had not yet learned to attach the proper complex ideas.

"With an industry, therefore, worthy of his birth, he proceeded cautiously to pick away the putty that secured the glass. Having removed it, he looked around, lest any meddling, impertinent person should have observed him. All was safe, he thought; but, just as he was about to remove the pane, he received a box on the right cheek, that produced for some time within his head the music of a peal of bells. It came from the rough and avaricious proprietor of the shop, who, insensible to his ingenuity and his youth, had stolen upon him.

"The

"The next morning, one of the magistrates of the town, aware of the long train of evils that results from want of exercise, benevolently sent him to a house where persons, under the influence of a morbid disinclination to regular employment, are often induced, by the prevailing arguments of some gentlemen who attend them, to exert themselves in the laudable occupation of preparing the valuable plant *cannabis*, which is sometimes distinguished among botanists by the name of hemp. As a vegetable regimen is found most conducive to health and morality, the diet of the persons residing in such houses is generally of bread and water.

"In this excellent abode the little Gaspar tarried three months; and it was thought by his parents, but herein perhaps they

they evinced some partiality, that he departed from it much edified.

"At the age of eighteen, he had the good fortune to please a young man, whose approbation was surely not a little creditable to him. This young man, though not a prince, had the spirit of one. He would have commanded armies if he had them, and have stamped metal with his own image, if, by so doing, he could have made it coin. He felt that he had talents to govern, but he lived in a country where the government was jealous of rivals. Consequently it was quite natural that a warfare should take place between him and it; but for want of forces on his side he was compelled to proceed secretly. The sinews of war are money; and as his enemies ungenerously kept this from him, he, like a great

a great man, determined to make some for himself.

"By his skill in metallurgy, he was enabled to bestow on mere brass and pewter the appearance of gold and silver; and to his admirable imitations he contrived ingeniously, for the greater facility of negociation, to give the exact resemblance of the circulating medium employed by his foes. This was, it must be admitted, a masterly stratagem. Gaspar, whom he employed to purchase necessaries for the campaign, was unfortunately suspected of a hostile intent and apprehended. He exhibited a firmness on the occasion that would have done honour to a Roman; and such was the effect of his interesting appearance and of his eloquence, that, after a few preliminary ceremonies, he was carried in triumph to the market-place, and

there elevated amidst an immense crowd of people, upon a frame, curiously fabricated for the occasion, and constructed with such an attention to his comforts, that it even presented proper conveniences to support his head and hands. It being a fast-day, the populace, according to the ancient and simple custom of the country, produced such a number of eggs for his use, that they might be said in a manner to shower around him.

"On a subsequent occasion, being in distress for some necessaries, he, in that frank and unceremonious manner which often marks the great, accosted a gentleman on the high road, and borrowed from him eighty *Louis d'ors*. Being determined in his own mind to discharge the obligation punctually, he thought it unnecessary to make any formal speech at the time promising

mising payment; and it was a matter of no small surprise to him, in some months afterwards, to find himself arrested at the instance of his ungenerous and hard-hearted creditor.

"Hearing that he had a taste for navigation, it was thought a pity to confine Gaspar in a jail, so the judges, purely out of regard for him, and to testify their sense of his merit, took the trouble of procuring for him a situation aboard a royal vessel. In this he remained five years, and in that time his manners and his morals were improved considerably. He afterwards entered into general trade, but, being naturally forgetful, he omitted, upon some occasions, to pay the duties imposed by the legislature on his merchandize, and his enemies, taking advantage of these inadvertencies, had the baseness to call him a

smuggler, and as such to prosecute him; but he escaped their malice, and he has not yet been hanged."

CHAP

CHAP. III.

Miser chi mal' oprando si confida,
Ch' ogn' or star debbia il maleficio occulto;
Che quando ogn' altro taccia, intorno grida
L'aria, e la terra stessa, in ch' è sepulto;
E Dio fa spesso, che 'l peccato guida
Il peccator, poi ch' alcun di gli ha indulto;
Che se medesmo, senza altrui richiesta,
Inavvedutamente manifesta.

.....

——————————The tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart.

.....

My shivering blood, congeal'd, forgot to flow;
Aghast I stood a monument of woe.

The time for the arrival of Mr. Bolton and Julia at Bourdeaux having expired, Theodore became alarmed for their safety, and, after twelve days of painful expectation, he resolved to travel towards Calais by the *route* which he knew they determined on. Accordingly, leaving a letter for them, should

they arrive in his absence, he set off, and by so doing escaped the violence of Gaspar Pontgebre, Pierre Dontache, and other bravoes, who, on the night after his departure, were to have attempted his assassination. He thought himself bound in honour, by the promise of secrecy made to the Count by Mr. Bolton, and therefore what he knew and what he suspected of that monster, remained buried in his bosom; but, dreading the effects of his policy or his vengeance, he used the precaution of leaving Bourdeaux privately. He arrived at Cognac about noon, where he was told that no English travellers had passed for a considerable time.

Having ordered some refreshment, he walked out for a short time while it was preparing. As he sauntered along, a boy, whom he recollected to have seen at St. Uldrich,

Uldrich, accosted him. "Ah! Mr. Dalbert," said the boy, "I am very glad to meet you, for I have had something to tell you, Sir, that is of very great consequence. Did you ever hear tell, Sir, of the *Isle de Peine?*"—"Yes."—"Mr. Bolton and Mademoiselle ———"—"What of them?"—"Are now there, or at least I saw them brought to it eight days ago."—"How! brought to the *Isle de Peine?*"—"Indeed it is true, Sir. I was on the road going from this town to the village of Darsace, when, whom should I see rising the hill in a carriage, but *Monsieur* and his daughter? They were at some distance, and I expected to be passed by them in a minute, when suddenly they drove into a narrow, dirty little lane, off the high road. I thought it very odd to be sure, Sir, and I was tempted to follow the carriage, but it went so hard, that had

I not taken a short cut, I should have lost sight of them. Knowing that this was only a by-road for the country-people, and that no carriage ever travels it, I was very curious to find out what brought *Monsieur* such a dangerous way; so there being a high rock near me, I climbed to the top of it, in order to have a wide view, and thence I saw the carriage pass the *Charente,* and gallop along the opposite bank for a good way. Immediately afterwards a boat, with some lady in white, and a green veil, passed across to the *Isle de Peine:* I am sure it was *Mademoiselle,* because I saw a green veil on her in the carriage. There were three men in the boat besides, and one of them, no doubt, was Mr. Bolton. What I had seen made me very uneasy, as *Mademoiselle* had been so good to me at St. Uldrich, and that *Isle de Peine* is such a terrible

place.

place. So, in order to make things sure, I went on to the village of Quardos, through which I knew the carriage must have passed, and there I heard that an empty one had gone through a little while before."

"Who lives in the *Isle de Peine?*" inquired Theodore. "Oh! Sir, nobody ever likes to go there. There is a ruined church on it that's haunted even in the daytime, and unless it is some murderer or other, no one, I believe, ventures into it. Only that my present master is in Languedoc, I should have asked him leave to go to Bourdeaux for a day, in order, Sir, to tell you all this, and now I think myself very lucky indeed to have the honour of seeing you here."

Theodore rewarded the boy with a few crowns, bade him be silent, and returned to his inn, musing on the intelligence he

had just heard. Having ordered a horse to be saddled for him, he rode along one of the banks of the *Charente*, until he came to a spot from which he could observe the island. He had supplied himself with a good telescope, and he could plainly discover Julia in what had been the cupola of the monastery. His heart palpitated as he viewed her. "A romantick little island that, Sir," said he, to a decent-looking man whom he met. "Pray has it any inhabitants?"—"At present it has, Sir. I am told that within this fortnight some people have been seen on it, but for nine years past that I have lived in the neighbourhood, I can answer for it no human being was to be found there, save some coiners, who were detected in those ruins about a twelvemonth ago."—"Strange! surely the land might be turned to some account?"—

"Why,

" Why, Sir, none of our peasantry would enter that island for any consideration. They think that that old fabrick is haunted by evil spirits, and, besides, it is at all times extremely difficult to land there. Count Egfryd, whose estate it is, has never been able to derive the smallest advantage from it."—" Count Egfryd! Is he the proprietor?"—" Yes, Sir, and to him belongs the little yellow house you see on the opposite side of the river, and likewise the ruined castle near it, formerly the seat of the D'Auvignacs."—" You have been on the island?" said Theodore, seemingly unmindful of the information he had just received. " Yes, Sir, I have gone there to shoot, but it is so troublesome to get a boat through the morass that surrounds it, that a man pays dear enough for any sport he finds there."

" A morass surrounds it then ?"—" Yes, Sir, except where a narrow canal, a mile long, I believe, winds with a thousand curves through it. I know nothing of fortification, but I do believe that two men, placed at the termination of the canal near the ruins, would be able to repel five hundred invaders, for the morass is so deep and so broad that it is absolutely impossible to cross it, and therefore there is no way to enter the island but by the canal."—" A picturesque agreeable country all around," observed Theodore; " and if there were a cottage on this side of the river to be let, I believe I should be tempted to take it."—" Look," said the stranger, " at the little white one that appears to hang over the water, it is at present unoccupied, and you can have it with a few acres of land at a trifling rent."—" Nothing would

would make me so happy; but to whom am I to apply?"—"To me."—"Are you, Sir, the proprietor?"—"I am." In a few minutes the bargain was closed, and Theodore the next day, under the name of Mr. Froigné, took possession of his little farm.

He had brought a servant with him from Bourdeaux, a young man of the name of Guillaume, on whose fidelity he could depend, and to him he confided what he had discovered, and what he feared. It was clear that Mr. Bolton and Julia were prisoners on the island and in the power of the Count; but how were they to be released, or how was any information to be conveyed to them? A thousand plans occurred to Theodore, and as many to Guillaume. Each racked his ingenuity and invention. It was idle to think of violence, as the island was accessible only at one

spot,

spot, where the slightest resistance would keep off a considerable force; and no force could be obtained so secretly, as that the vigilant Count, who was probably in the neighbourhood, would not be apprized of it. To apply to the magistracy, and thus expose him, were to urge him to desperation, and perhaps cause the murder of the prisoners. Stratagem, alone, therefore, must be resorted to.

Among the accomplishments that distinguished Miss Bolton, was a perfect knowledge of short-hand. This art she had taught to Theodore, and it struck him that he might now avail himself of it to extricate her. Accordingly, that side of his cottage which was next the island, he painted black, and, in stenographic characters, as large as the wall would permit, he traced this sentence: *Theodore bids you be*

in

in the cupola at twelve to-morrow night. Each letter was four feet long, and some of the characters were still longer, and two hundred and fifty lamps were nailed to the wall, along the lines traced, so that the lamps, placed as they were, expressed the sentence completely. This being done, he supplied himself with a large quantity of fireworks, and on the fourth evening after his arrival, all being then ready for his purpose, he, as soon as it became dark, began to play them off.

The outlaws, from the windows of the refectory, viewed with amazement the most brilliant exhibition they had ever witnessed. "What is the meaning of all this?" said one. "Some great festival, perhaps," answered another. "Or," cried a third, "may be a marriage has taken place, and that this is a gallant contrivance

of

of the bridegroom." A fourth thought it more likely to be the commemoration of the birth-day of the lord of the manor. "Whatever, or whosoever it is," observed Jaques, "we should be much obliged for the pleasure it affords us."—"Why obliged?" snarled Garquine. "What is it all but a little flame and crackling? Some fool, I warrant you, is throwing away his money, now, on this nonsense, and perhaps, before the year is out, will want wherewithal to buy his dinner. And all for what? To amuse blockheads and children; for there is no person of sense that must not laugh at it." Each gave a different opinion, while all, not even excepting Garquine, continued to observe with attention. The night was uncommonly dark, and, for two hours, rockets, wheels, stars, and various other inventions of pyrotechny, filled

filled the air with illuminations and explosions.

In an instant the whole ceased, and all was black, but suddenly the two hundred and fifty lamps, which had been previously prepared with the essential oil of turpentine and flax, burst into one prodigious blaze, and the words, *Theodore bids you be in the cupola at twelve to-morrow night,* might, by any one acquainted with the system of stenography that had been employed, be read at the distance of a mile.

Theodore trusted that the attention of the two prisoners would be attracted by the fireworks, and consequently that Miss Bolton would be induced to examine the light of the lamps, and to read the sentence it conveyed. Nor was he mistaken. She and her father had been spectators of his brilliant display from the cupola; and when

when the steady lustre of the lamps had fixed their attention, Julia instantly comprehended its meaning. She read the burning words to her father, and each, at that happy moment, felt a transport of joy which banished every painful reflection. Hope once again, for an instant, animated their bosoms.

"What an admirable contrivance!" said Julia. "By no other means could we possibly have received that message. Oh, father! when we see Theodore, and my heart tells me we shall soon see him, all our danger and adversity will have terminated."—"You forget," observed Mr. Bolton, thoughtfully, and dispirited by the sad and sudden recollection, "the danger of entering this island, and the impossibility of quitting it." Julia made no reply, but sunk on her knees, and, in silent prayer, invoked,

voked, for her beloved Theodore, the protection of her tutelary saint.

At twelve o'clock, the next night, the father and daughter were in the cupola. Not a star was to be seen, and not a sound to be heard, save the soft whisper of a gentle gale that blew from the south, and the gurgling of the river, where it rippled through the rushes. All was black and solemn, when the most interesting of females, and her excellent parent, looking toward the white cottage, observed a number of lights, apparently in a cluster, moving through the air. At first they seemed to skim the surface of the river, but soon they rose gradually to a considerable height. By degrees they approached the island, and at length appeared hovering above the ruined monastery. Still they continued to move, now to the right, then

to

to the left; at one moment descending, and at another rising; sometimes in a direction down, and at other times up the river. They were about twenty in number, forming a luminous circle, and below them was a large but dim body of light, which appeared to have a motion different from that of the others, though connected with them. It was a strange and incomprehensible, but not unhandsome spectacle; and, to the two observers, it was, in a peculiar degree, interesting and important.

With their heads bent backwards, and their eyes fixed on the elevated moving lights, they waited silently and anxiously for an explanation of the phenomenon. For two hours they were kept in the most painful suspense, when suddenly, Julia cried out, in a tone of alarm, "What is that? oh, Sir! did you feel any thing pass across

across you?"—"Feel any thing! no, what was it?"—"There again! oh! something that hangs down from those lights—here it is!"—"Let me feel it," said he, in some disorder. "This! is this it? why it is a silk string, and I will pull it."

He drew the string gradually, and when he had gathered about twenty yards of it, the motion of the lights appeared in a great measure to have ceased, and in a few minutes other strings fell on him, and some on her. These Julia collected, and all being joined, were pulled together. It was now evident that they were connected with the lights, which, as the cords were drawn, descended towards the cupola. Arrived within fifty or sixty feet of it, a large paper-kite was apparent, with a number of small lamps, being the lights that had attracted the observation of the two prisoners,

soners, burning in its circumference. A horn lantern, containing a light, was attached to the termination of its tail. Drawn nearer, the kite presented on its front, in red letters, these words—*a letter in the lantern.* "A letter in the lantern!" cried Julia. "Oh! let us draw it to us." The cords were pulled with redoubled activity, the lantern was seized, and the letter was found and read by the trembling girl to her father.

"When is our persecution to cease? When shall I clasp my best-beloved, my dearest Julia to my heart, never to part from her again? But the same Providence that rescued me from *the grave,* and from the barbarous effects of my unjust conviction, will guard your innocence,

and

deliver you from the power of the execrable Egfryd. Banish your fears. Believe my attachment to you unchangeable; and be assured that whatever love, money, courage, ingenuity and address can effect, shall be employed to liberate you. I occupy the cottage, one side of which was lately blackened near the river. I am called Mr. Froigné, and I take care never to be seen by any one but my servant. *Adieu!* I could say much, but I must confine myself to what is indispensable. Make my most affectionate respects to my loved and honoured friend, your father. Oh! that you may not have been separated from him! Put your answer in the lantern. With what impatience shall I not expect it! *Adieu! Adieu!* THEODORE."

Julia,

Julia, in speechless ecstacy, immediately wrote on a piece of paper, with a pencil—

"My father and I are well and together. Egfryd has not appeared. Six outlaws guard us. They are prevented from attempting to escape by gunpowder in the causeway, which any effort to pass through the canal would blow up, and whoever should enter it from the river would be crushed to death by a rock, placed for that purpose on the top of the causeway. Should the person attempting to enter by the canal escape the rock, and persist in advancing, then the explosion must necessarily ensue, which would involve us all in sudden and utter destruction. With what rapture do I not seize this opportunity to save

save you from danger. *Adieu!* ever, ever affectionately your JULIA."

This note she put into the lantern, and releasing the silk strings, the kite rose, and was drawn to the spot from which it first ascended.

With minds in a state far different from that which they had lately experienced, Mr. and Miss Bolton retired to rest, and the sun, which shone brightly the next day, saw them, if not contented, at least not miserable. It was twelve o'clock, and they were walking, her hand under his arm, in a gallery immediately under the cupola, when a sudden noise, like the feigned voice of a person speaking loudly, arrested their steps, and excited their fear and their astonishment. The word *hark!* was plainly

articulated. Julia trembled. Mr. Bolton looked around. "Hark!" repeated the mysterious voice, after a little pause, "you have been brought hither to obey me, attend therefore to what I say. You, Mr. Bolton, possess a hundred thousand pounds sterling in the English funds, and you, Miss Bolton, twenty thousand. All this I must obtain, and I will obtain it without risk. To sell out this stock a letter of attorney from each of you to one Stephen Berland is necessary; and to receive it from him, when sold out, an order to him must be signed by you both, requiring him to pay it over. Two sheets of paper, stamped according to the English law, and a sheet of unstamped paper, are lying on the stone mantle-piece in the ruined dormitory, together with a precedent for a letter of attorney. Let each of you copy this precedent

cedent on one of the stamped sheets, and let the order to Berland be drawn by one of you, and signed by both, on the unstamped sheet of paper, according to the form subjoined to the precedent. Then leave the whole on the same mantle-piece. Let all this be done to-day, or you shall lose your lives—Shall lose your lives!—Mind these words. I must not be trifled with."

The voice ceased. It sounded as if spoken through a narrow tube. It was loud and hollow, but not indistinct. Uttered as it was by a hidden person, whose presence in the island was inexplicable, the amazement it caused in the mind of each auditor was mingled with no slight degree of horror. They stood motionless for some minutes, dreading a continuation of the mysterious address, when Mr. Bolton said

to his daughter, in a low tone, "This is the Count. He said truly that he would be sometimes here, though unseen. Look at the six outlaws without the ruins on the grass. Who but he, then, can have spoken? But let us to the dormitory and do what is required. We shall else, certainly, fall a sacrifice to his disappointment and his fury. But perhaps," continued he, in a still lower tone, "before he can make use of the letters of attorney, we shall, with the assistance of Theodore, have obtained our liberation."

Julia, pale and shaking, accompanied her father to the dormitory, where they found all as had been described to them. They wrote the order to Berland and the letters of attorney in the manner prescribed, and then left the four papers on the mantle-piece. This was so high that a person

person standing on the floor could hardly see what was on it, and the ceiling above it had, in more than one spot, given way. The Count would probably have, with his own hand, fabricated the two powers of attorney and the letter to Berland, but no imitation, however excellent, of writing can escape detection, he knew, in the public offices in London. His only motive for suffering his two victims to live, was the possibility of some further act by them being necessary; and he concealed himself, lest, during his absence in England, on the perpetration of his fraudulent designs, the two prisoners might, by some unforeseen and inconceivable means, effect their escape, and be enabled to convict him.

The voice in the dormitory had, as Mr. Bolton suspected, issued from this formid-

able man, who had entered the island by an arched subterranean way, that led under the river, from the ruined castle on the main land near his yellow cottage, to the foundations of the monastery. A spiral staircase thence ascended to a small unlighted chamber, within the main wall of the building, from which chamber three narrow passages branched in different directions, through the partitions of the ruined fabrick. He had been long acquainted with these hidden avenues. They had been mentioned to him, under an injunction of secrecy, by his deceased father. The injunction was unnecessary. The mystery of such obscure recesses too well accorded with the darkness of his disposition, and the iniquity of his designs, to be confided by him to any person.

Miss Bolton's note, sent in the lantern, produced

produced violent agitation in the mind of Theodore; but she and her father were well, and hope, which is ever inseparable from love, bade him expect to see them released in a few days. Their release, he knew, must depend solely on his exertions, and those he was not only willing, but anxious to employ. After much deliberation he determined to attempt the passage of the morass. The enterprize was difficult and dangerous, perhaps impracticable; but difficulties and dangers were unregarded by him in his ardour to save his mistress. With an alacrity, known only to those who are truly enamoured, he procured timber for the construction of a raft, and workmen for its formation; but he feared to send a second message by the kite, lest the suspicions of the Count should be excited,

and the difficulty of the intended liberation increased.

While Theodore was employed on the construction of the raft, the Count was on his journey to England, whither he went when he obtained the two letters of attorney. These, from one of his hiding-places, he had removed off the mantle-piece, in a few hours after they had been placed there. He would, it is likely, have applied for and obtained them sooner, and perhaps immediately after the seizure of the two prisoners, but a hurt he had received by a fall, had disabled him from walking for some days.

Previous to his departure for England, he left orders with his servant Guiscard to learn the name of the stranger that had lately taken the white cottage, his business

in

in that country, his connexions, and the object of those fireworks, which had been displayed with such apparently unmeaning expense.

It is at once curious and alarming to think of the present situation of the principal personages of this history. On one side of the river a decayed castle, communicating, by a subterranean passage, with the monastery, and possessed by Egfryd, the absolute master of all who breathe upon the island—by Egfryd, who has resolved that every individual of them shall perish. On the opposite bank Theodore, in his cottage, separated by an impassable morass, from all his soul holds dear, and endeavouring by some ingenious contrivance, to liberate her from dishonour and from death: while Julia and her father, joint inhabitants, with six felons, of the

crumbling cloister, dare not even attempt to escape, and can scarcely hope for deliverance.

Mr. Bolton, on the day after the voice had been heard by him in the gallery, fell ill, partly from the agitation his spirits had sustained, and partly from his recent change of diet. Julia had watched by his side all night, and in the morning, finding he had fallen into a profound sleep, she retired to her favourite cupola, to enjoy the fragrance of the air and the freshness of the morning breeze, and to gaze on the habitation of her Theodore. She could not sleep, and the contrast between the close and wretched apartment she had left, and the magnificence and extent of the present scene, gave new elasticity to her mind, and revived in her heart a portion of its latent cheerfulness.

She

She pondered a long time on the mysterious voice. It was Count Egfryd's she was certain—he whom her soul abhorred —he at whose name she trembled. But where was his concealment? how did he hide himself? A vague conception of the truth floated in her mind. Surely, thought she, that impenetrable and tremendous reprobate has some passage from the main land, under the river, into these ruins. How otherwise can the presence of the invisible visitor be explained? for never would he expose himself to the possibility of a long confinement in a place where no enjoyment could be had, where his life would be insecure, and from whence, without such a passage, departure would be almost impossible. He is now probably on his way to England with the letters of attorney, and even were he not gone thither,

there is very little danger, at this early hour, of his being here. Let me then, this moment, exercise all my courage and acuteness to save my father, and to see my Theodore.

With an eye, sharp as the inquiring glance of a nurse who seeks her stolen infant—with a step, light as the bound of the slender antelope, Julia traversed the dismantled apartments, examined the broken walls, sounded the rotten ceilings, climbed the tottering staircases, and inspected the fractured partitions. That which had formerly been the belfry, was a dark, arched, and lofty room. The floor exhibited sundry breaches, and below, at a considerable depth, might be seen the marble pavement of an ancient altar. It was an operation of no small peril to pass from one side of this belfry to the other, but

but Julia was urged by motives that gave her courage, and her courage was crowned with success. In an angle where a great portion of the wall had given way and tumbled down, and near to the floor, was an aperture five feet high, and nearly three feet wide. Into this she ventured, and within she found a passage to the left, leading directly to the top of a spiral staircase.

"God be praised!" cried she, piously, "I have discovered what I sought." Having fortified her resolution with a fervent prayer, and committed herself to the providence of Heaven, she descended the steps. They were of stone, and barely broad enough to admit one person. Perfect darkness surrounded her, but she still proceeded, using the precaution, however, of feeling on each side, lest she should cross any

any other passage that might bewilder her on her return. She had gone slowly, and with all possible caution, down one hundred and fifty-seven steps, when she found herself on an earthen floor. She ventured to make a little noise, by coughing, and the echo at once terrified her almost to fainting, and convinced her that she was in a vault of immense extent. Dreading to lose, for an instant, her hold of the stone spindle, round which the spiral stairs revolved, apprehensive as she was that she should be for ever lost, and at the same time desirous to explore still further, she regretted that she had not thought to provide herself with a light, which would have enabled her to advance. It being useless to remain any longer in the dark, she returned to the ruined belfry, which, after her obscure and dangerous descent, appeared

peared to her a cheerful and splendid apartment. Such is the powerful effect of contrast and comparison. Arrived in the belfry, she was glad to seat herself on a heap of stones, and having in a short time recovered from the effects of her fatigue and terrour, she returned to her own room.

Her father continued, during the morning, so unwell, that though she wished to communicate to him the discovery she had made, she could not do so, she thought, with propriety. At twelve o'clock he again fell into a gentle slumber, and at twelve o'clock, she, who was now urged by an irresistible desire to continue her researches, supplied herself with two candles, and proceeded to the belfry. From the belfry she descended to the earthen floor with safety; but such was her dizziness in consequence of her agitation and the many circular turns she

she had taken in the light, while wheeling down within the narrow stone cylinder that contained the winding stairs, that she was compelled to sit for some time on the bottom step. She put the candles on the ground, and rested her head on her knees. The vertigo, however, did not long distress her.

When recovered, she raised her eyes and saw a prodigious cavern, extending further than her sight could reach. The roof was about twenty feet from the ground, and arched, and several rows of rude columns supported it. The ground was wet and the air damp. Before her, as she sat, was an avenue between two ranges of the columns, and to the end of this she hoped to walk. Taking up one of her candles, and leaving the other on the earth to light her back in case any accident should happen to that which she

she carried, she advanced. She went about twenty yards when she thought she heard a noise behind her. With a ghastly countenance she turned her head, expecting to be appalled by an apparition, or, worse than any apparition, by the diabolical Egfryd. But her fears had deceived her. There had been no noise, save what had been caused by her timid steps, if that might be called a noise, which was scarcely audible even to her own now painfully sensitive organ. She made the sign of a cross upon her forehead, and walked on.

Arrived nearly to the end of the avenue, a black humid wall terminated her view. She cast her eyes along its gloomy length, and, at some distance, saw an opening. She deliberated whether she should venture to go to it. She knew that if she approached if she would lose the view of the lighted candle

candle at the stairs, but if she should retire without looking into the opening, she would have effected nothing—she would have ventured much to no purpose.

Thus she deliberated, and with an intrepidity that would have done honour even to Theodore, she resolved to persevere in her enterprize. Marking attentively, therefore, the relative situations of the wall, the stairs, and the columns, so that she should not miss her way back, she went forward to the opening. It was high and narrow, and it ascended as it receded. She enters it. She goes about fifty yards. It then sinks. This, thinks she, leads under the river to the continent. Fresh ardour animates her. She walks with speed. She has already gone two hundred yards, when an insurmountable obstacle presents itself. This is a large iron door. She tries to stir it, but it is immoveable.

immoveable. It has no key-hole, and therefore it is, she supposes, fastened by bars on the other side.

Her disappointment bordered on despair. She returned, and, as she retraced her lonely steps, a part of the wall of the narrow passage attracted her attention. It was of a different colour from the rest of the wall, and it suggested to her mind the idea of a secret door. She stopped to examine it, and ascertained that it was a large piece of wood, which, in consequence of age, had fallen away a little from its ancient situation. She touched it, and found that it was worm-eaten and rotten. She pushed it, and it fell in pieces. A chamber appeared within. This was a temptation to curiosity that could not be resisted. She entered.

The side next the entrance was black, and on it was engraved, in a rude and grotesque manner,

manner, but legibly, though lightly, a multitude of letters, and in one place, near the door, a hand had been roughly sculptured in *alto relievo*, from the fore-finger of which was suspended a little ball. Julia cast a hasty glance at the engraving and the hand. "Is not this ball offered, as it were, to me?" said she to herself—"and should I not remove it?" She advanced her arm to it, took it off the finger, and put it in her pocket. No sooner had she done so, than she heard, or fancied she heard, an exclamation of detection and reproach.

"Hah!" was, she thought, the short but horrific sound. Fixed as the hand from which she had disengaged the ball, her eyes alone had motion. These she cast fearfully around, and, in the centre of the room, she beheld a spectacle, such as was never before seen. She dropped upon her knees, implored,

plored, with her looks, the protection of the Virgin, and tried to support herself by placing one of her hands on a marble table that stood near. The other was scarcely able to hold the candle. Religion, that never denies its aid to the true believer, sustained her at a moment, when, but for the supernatural support of Divine Beneficence, she must have been struck lifeless with horrour.

The regions of night and death, into which she had with such boldness descended, had already, to her imagination, been rendered more gloomy, more silent, and more dismal than they were, by her recollection of the brilliant sun, which, a few minutes before, had enlivened and irradiated every object within her view—by the cheerful labours, still present to her thoughts, of the distant peasantry employed

in

in their rural occupations—by the sweet warbling of the thousand winged inhabitants of the island—by the odorous gales and ripened charms of luxuriant autumn—and by the enamelled plains, and waving woods, and flowing waters, that embellished every prospect from the cupola. The dreadful and intolerable solitude of these murder-menacing vaults, had already acquired additional dreariness from the contrast it formed with her father's delightful society. The embittering remembrance of his animated serenity, his paternal attentions, and his calm and uniform tenderness, was now mingled in her mind with the painful reflections of a deep and rapid river flowing over her head—of a dilapidated cloister inhabited by banditti, among whom that beloved parent was languishing on a wretched pallet—of the monster Eg-

fryd prowling amid its ruined chambers, stalking through treacherous recesses in its massy walls, or, perhaps, approaching with silent step and ruffianly intent to the very centre of human horrours, whither her temerity had led her, and not another being within hearing of her shrieks.

These, and similar reflections had robbed the hapless Julia of all her resolution when most she wanted it. Not for her freedom would she have dared to cast a second glance at the most dreadful of all dreadful objects; not to purchase the presence of her faithful Theodore would she have approached nearer to it by a single step. Almost petrified with fear, the pious girl, her eyes averted from the terrific sight, continued her fervid, though silent invocation. As she prayed she slowly recovered sufficient strength to stand, and she departed, tottering,

tottering, from the frightful and appalling scene of mystery and murder.

Her knees sinking, and her steps as hurried as her faintness would permit, she gained the larger vaults and obtained a view of the columns. She began to breathe more freely, and her limbs to tremble less violently, when a low and plaintive accent, uttered under some distant arch, reverberated upon her tortured ear. Her heart beat against her breast with painful emotion, and a quickness that nearly deprived her of the power of respiration. Pale as the corpse of an unhappy maid, who has sunk under the deceitful stroke of slow consumption, her eyes starting from their sockets, her mouth wide open, her pallid lips moving tremulously, her tongue cleaving to her palate, her eyebrows raised, her hair erect, her face drawn to a state of

preternatural

preternatural elongation, her shoulders elevated, and her hands and arms shaking, the terrified girl stared around.

There is in all things that have life a principle, intended by Providence for their preservation, which is a capability of exerting extraordinary strength and unwonted activity in the moment of extreme peril. The fear of Julia had, upon the present occasion, the effect of resolution. She flew along the moist earth, and arrived in the avenue which she had first traversed. She looked toward the staircase, expecting to be guided by the light of the second candle, but dreading, at the same time, to behold some frightful object. Horrible to tell! the candle she could not see. It had been removed, and the one she carried in her trembling hand had now so long a snuff, and gave so dim a light, that she could

not distinguish whether the staircase were before her. There was no time for deliberation. She proceeded according to her recollection of the way, and in a minute she saw the stairs, but there was no candle near them. Too much agitated to bestow much consideration on this strange circumstance, she ascended the steps and soon reached the belfry. There she dropped in a swoon, and it was an hour before she recovered and was able to crawl into her own room, where, having sat down, she viewed herself in the mirror of her writing-box.

Reader, imagine, if thou canst, her astonishment, when, on looking at the glass, she saw upon her bosom an amber necklace, which she had never beheld before, secured by a golden clasp. This circumstance, joined to what had occurred during her

her research, perplexed, and alarmed, and shocked her excessively. To the golden clasp was attached a slip of paper, on which were these words, written with a black lead pencil :—

" Never again be afraid to enter my palace. It is dark but spacious. I reign there, and you shall always have my protection. I have seen and I respect you. I have heard you converse with your father; you are a Briton, and I admire the English. Oh ! how I loved a maid of your country ! Eliza ! I, Lonchiderimos ! But no more ! you shall never see me—my misery might terrify you. But still I reign, and who would dare to disturb me ? Other monarchs delight in show, I find majesty in darkness. This necklace has hung on a royal neck, but never till now was it excelled by the beauty of the wearer."

On each bead of the necklace was a coronet. Julia looked at it, and then at the paper, looked again, and again, and the more she looked the more she was amazed. She then took the ball out of her pocket, and found, on opening it, that it was a square piece of silk, which had been wrapped up into that shape, and that it contained several words which had been worked in it. The silk had originally been white, but it had become brown from age, and the letters, in their present tarnished state, were entirely black, but they were still to be read. The language was Italian; the orthography was ancient, but the whole was, with a little study, intelligible. The following is a loose translation of it:—

"Whoever thou art that readest this, I conjure thee, if thou be a Christian, by our holy Saviour; or if thou be a Pagan

or

or an Infidel, by the Almighty himself!—by thy eternal soul!—by all thou valuest!—by all thou fearest!—by all thou lovest!—do what I here require, and never, by word, or deed, or sign, or look, convey to mortal, any thing thou mayest have seen, or read, or suspected, in these subterranean apartments! If thou refuse my request—if thou violate this injunction—may every ill that human nature can endure be thine! May thou commit some crime, new to the world, and horrible as new! May insatiable voracity and unquenchable thirst consume thee, without the means of procuring the vilest food or the foulest drink! May northern blasts, and drenching sleet, and starving frost, stiffen thy joints, and agonize thy every limb, and may thou want even the meanest rags to cover thy shivering frame! May sleep fly from thee!

May thy parents desert and execrate thee! May thou dread the light of day, and the human countenance! May thou feel the cruellest pangs of never-slumbering remorse! May tumultuous and cursing crowds, urged by thy own children, hunt thee, wherever thou shalt appear, as a thing unclean, noxious, excommunicated, and abominable! May owls, rats, and other vermin of the dark, be thy only associates! May loathsome diseases attack thee, and may each of those diseases be incurable! May no beam of hope illumine thy festered heart! May fear and hatred be thy ruling passions! and may nought remain of thee, unimpaired, but thy memory, to envenom thy every pang!

"But grant my request, and preserve, undivulged, what thou shalt discover, and, if the prayers of a dying woman are heard,

thou

thou shalt be blessed with peace, content, and happiness, and crowned with unalterable felicity. Know, stranger, that the peace of a Christian soul depends on thy exertions, and my salvation on thy active charity. Upon the wall of my prison is carved the story of my crimes and my sufferings. The nails of my coffin were my tools. It is unintelligible without a key to explain certain parts of it. That key is worked at the bottom of this silk. In a cavity, behind the marble table, is a box full of gold. Of this keep what thou mayest want; with the remainder pay for masses to redeem my sinful soul. But remember that thy compliance and thy secrecy are duties, not to be violated but at the risk of incurring the terrours of all the imprecations thou hast read. 14th June, 1583."

Under this were some marks, and dates, and names, each of which was followed by the word or words it was intended to express.

Julia laid down the silk. She thought of her father, of Theodore, of Count Egfryd, of the cavern, of the spectacle. Her mind, weakened by terrour, suffered pain even to anguish; but recollecting, at length, that her father might want her, she locked up the silk, the paper, and the necklace; and having bestowed some little care on her person, necessary after her explorement, she tottered to the invalid.

He was awake and expecting her, but as he was sick and heavy, her agitation escaped his notice, and the terrible and mysterious inhibition, she had lately read, enforced her silence. She remained with

him

him until evening in a state of perturbation that few have experienced, and then she retired for the night, glad to conceal her disorder from his view.

CHAP. IV.

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When church-yards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to the world!

.....

————————Oh Hell! canst thou reserve
Still greater pains, or do I not indeed
Contain thee here? I do, I do, yes here! Within
This breast infernal furies dwell! No peace,
No calm content I taste; but sin, and shame,
And dread, confusion and dismay.

.....

O, my offence is rank! It smells to Heaven;
It hath the primal, eldest curse upon it.

.....

I saw a cavern black and fathomless,
Whereout foul steams exhal'd, and poisons flow'd;
Within its horrid womb, a blazing lake
Spouted sulphureous torrents through the gloom,
Tossing poor damned souls; whose shriekings rent
Hell's burning vault, through hell's entire extent.

The Count Egfryd, meanwhile, arrived in England, where he put in practice a plan, which enabled him, by means of the two letters of attorney, to draw out of the public

public funds one hundred and twenty thousand pounds sterling, without exposing himself to the possibility of suspicion. I should here develop the plan he practised, did not the well-being of society, and the security of private property, forbid so dangerous a disclosure.

Nature, how little dost thou require! but how difficult is it to obtain that little! Wherefore does the naked Esquimaux traverse the immense continent of North America even to the pole, encountering the savage violence of hostile tribes, immeasurable deserts, intense frost, and immoderate fatigue? Why labour, without intermission, from the beginning of the year till its termination, and year after year during their wretched lives, the degraded boors of Russia and of Poland? What urges the hapless beings who inhabit

Friuli, Idria, Almaden and Guacamvelica, to expose themselves to the noxious vapours and volatile particles proceeding from the quicksilver which is found in these mephitick mines? Alas! hunger is the motive, and subsistence the end of all.

Is not the shivering author, scribbling in his garret, sensible of the pangs which await his temerity, from the insolence of booksellers, the severity of critics, and the contempt of the public; and alive to the present tortures that attend his violent efforts to invent incidents for a play, to fancy imagery for a poem, or to produce, amid penury and vexation, rich and lively descriptions of ease, luxury and pleasure? Ah! too sensible he is of those pangs and tortures, but—he must dine.

Placed between starvation and slavery, how

how many millions crave a little bread, of whom how many crave in vain? If old, feeble, or diseased, the wretch is left to perish, or is cast into that receptacle of human misery—a poor-house. If possessed of physical powers equal to long hardship and extreme fatigue, a paltry and inadequate pittance is mayhap scornfully dolled to him. For this he is compelled to sacrifice his liberty for life and his nature, and to become a brute part of that monstrous, murdering machine, an army. Nature, how little dost thou require! but how difficult is it to the innocent to obtain that little! How easy to gain it by crime! The vilest of mankind, the abominable Egfryd, by one atrocious act, has now possessed himself of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds sterling, the very interest of

of which would yield, for ever, all the necessaries of life to three hundred persons!

While he was thus employed, Gaspar Pontgebre was not idle. This villain never, for an instant, suffered himself to forget that if he could discover his unknown employer, he would be bribed to silence with independence and wealth. His reflections on this subject occupied his mind during the day, and often disturbed his rest at night. Between the turnkey of the gaol wherein *Marie de Solase* had been confined and him, such intimacy subsisted as congeniality of baseness and similar habits of sottish intemperance may produce between two wretches naturally vile, and inveterately wicked. In one of their drunken orgies the turnkey undertook to explain to the other, who, however, paid

little attention to him, the mode of her escape; and then he proceeded, in the scarcely coherent talkativeness of inebriated vulgarity, to relate what she had communicated to him, after her apprehension, of her retreat in *the grave*, and of the Count.

The word "*grave*" roused Gaspar from his stupidity and inattention. Opening wide his horrible eyes, he listened till the other had concluded, when, starting up, he exclaimed, "By G—! I have him." The turnkey attributed this exclamation to drunkenness, as he did likewise Gaspar's departure, which was abrupt and precipitate. But he retired in order to deliberate in private. *The grave*, thought he, is not far from St. Uldrich. I carried Mr. Dalbert to the grave; Mr. Dalbert was a visitor at St. Uldrich; the Count D'Egfryd is the proprietor of St. Uldrich; he assisted

Marie

Marie in escaping to a cavern in *the grave;* he is the richest and most powerful man in the country; and to him belongs the uninhabited *Isle de Peine,* whither the Boltons were lately carried. The Boltons were at St. Uldrich.—As I live he is the man!—now is the time to work on his pride and fear—now is the time to charge him with those crimes, and to demand a reward equal to his danger.

Gaspar accordingly lost not a moment in repairing to St. Uldrich. There he was told that the Count had, a short time before, travelled to his sporting cottage, in the province of Angoumois. This information confirmed his suspicions, and induced him to continue his journey even to the cottage. Being informed there that the Count had gone to England, he proceeded to Calais, where he waited until the object

object of his suspicion and his plunder returned.

It was about two in the afternoon when the packet arrived, and the first person seen by the Count on landing was the formidable Gaspar. A vague suspicion of danger instantly struck the crafty and suspicious Egfryd, and he feared, as the fact was, that nothing but an intention to watch or to insult him, could have brought Gaspar to Calais, as he had positive orders never to quit Bourdeaux without the permission of his invisible master. The Count was too great an adept in duplicity to appear disturbed, or to look again at the object of his dread. He repaired to his hotel, and seemed, to all around him, undisturbed and chearful. But in a far different state was his mind. He dreaded that he was discovered, and he revolved in his mind

the

the immediate destruction of Gaspar and his associate. If his suspicions were well founded, he knew that the former would wait until an opportunity should offer of speaking to him in private; and he thought the best course he could adopt, at present, would be to walk out immediately into the country, and to saunter into some retired spot, where the fellow might accost him without being seen.

The Count, accordingly, about five o'clock, strolled into the suburbs, and, as he had conjectured, the bravo followed him. Having entered a little valley through which a rivulet flowed, the treacherous Egfryd seated himself negligently on a rock, and took out of his pocket a tablet wherein he pretended to write. Gaspar suddenly appeared before him. "Sir," said he, "I make bold to speak to you, but

but you will excuse me, for my business is of some consequence."—" My good fellow," cried the other, appearing surprised, and, as it were, interrupted by his address, " what would you have? I shall listen to you with great pleasure, but I am sure you mistake, for I don't know a creature in Calais. I am the *Comte D'Egfryd.*" —" Oh! my Lord, I know that very well, and it is because you are the *Comte D'Egfryd*, that I expect you will put me, for my life, beyond the reach of want."— " Because I am the *Comte D'Egfryd!* Explain yourself, friend."—" Explain myself, friend! why then I will, and that in a few words. *Marie de Solase*, Sir, was liberated from jail by your means, and concealed in a cavern in *the grave;* and by your means Mr. Dalbert was decoyed from St. Uldrich and left to perish at *the grave*

grave—the same Mr. Dalbert whom I and another were commissioned by you to assassinate at Bourdeaux. You are found out, my Lord, and I will not be trifled with."

"My friend," said the Count, in seeming dismay, "surely you will not ruin me. Half my fortune is yours, and be discreet." —"Oh! as to that," replied the ruffian, "be you generous and I shall be discreet, I warrant you."—"Well, well, as an earnest of my liberality, in the first instance I will give you this." So saying, the perfidious man took out of his pocket what seemed a red leather case, tied into a cylindrical shape. "You shall have the contents of this," continued he, "for the present, and——"

What appeared a red leather case was the cover of a pistol of admirable workmanship. On the present occasion it shot a bullet

a bullet through the brain of Gaspar Pontgebre.

The Count in a short time returned to his hotel, first placing a discharged pistol, of equal *calibre* with that one which had been fired, in the right hand of the deceased. The next morning Gaspar was found in this situation, and no doubt was entertained that he had committed suicide.

While the Count is on his journey, and while Theodore is engaged in the construction of a proper raft for the passage of the morass, let me return to Miss Bolton.

Timid by nature, and superstitious by habit, the mystery of the hidden chamber, the terrours of her late research, the necklace, the lost candle, the pencilled paper, and the denunciations of the embroidered silk, had presented to her imagination phantoms of horrour, and filled her mind with

with wild and gloomy reveries on supernatural operations. Her peace deserted her. Her anxiety for her sick father, her love for the absent Theodore, her apprehensions of the wicked Count, all were lost in the dreadful conceptions of her fanatick, fear-fraught fancy. To utter a word of what she had discovered were, in her opinion, a profanation worse than sacrilege. On her obedience to the miraculous mandate she had received, depended, she thought, her future salvation; and on her promptitude and activity, her escape from the evils so solemnly imprecated. Peter the hermit felt not more ardour to perform his mission, than the terrified Julia to comply with the adjurations of the unknown, whose soul was by her means, she believed, to be rescued from purgatorial fires, wherein it had already

suffered

suffered for centuries. On no other subject could she think, and had not her father been confined to his bed and made dull by his illness, he must have observed the great alteration that took place in her looks and manner.

Fanaticism and superstition sometimes urge to acts which the cautious calculator would deem impossible, or the boldest warrior call rash. Resting her hopes of redemption on her implicit submission, and convinced that religion and Heaven demanded her agency, she was impatient again to explore the cavern. On the second night after she had made the discovery, leaving her father much recovered, she, at the eleventh hour, again ventured to descend. Warmed as she was by those new and powerful impulses, with her writing-box under her left arm, and a candle in her right hand, she reached the bottom of the stairs,

stairs, where, instead of losing her courage, she seemed to acquire increased resolution.

With the enthusiasm of an enraptured candidate for canonization, she walked, after sitting on the bottom-step for a few minutes, to the end of the avenue between the columns, and turned to the right towards the opening. This opening she entered, and she continued her course until she came to the secret chamber, the door of which had before crumbled down. She entered undauntedly, and placed her writing-box and candle on the marble table, under which she searched for, and within a small cavity, found the box of gold. She put it on the table, and then, kneeling down, proceeded to translate the sculptured inscription into English on the leaves of her pocket-book. To translate was more

easy

easy to her than to transcribe, and she had brought her writing materials, lest any part of the promised history should escape her memory. The piece of silk with the embroidered characters was before her, to serve as a key to the obscurities of which she had been apprized. Thus she wrote :—

" Endow me, Almighty, with strength to complete my task. The victim of a mother's cruelty, the lost to happiness, the buried though yet breathing, the unnatural and justly punished Aminta, once gay, once proud, once beautiful, once great, carves upon her tomb the story of her woes. Ere my coffin shall receive my emaciated and half-famished frame—ere my loved, luckless babe, incestuous offspring ! unbaptized, unsuckled, and unconscious of a mother's kiss, shall, within his infernal cage, be cramped to a cruel

death ; let me sculpture my horrid tale. I shall not, I wish not to survive him. Pride, pride, read here, and put away thy pomp ! Poverty and pain, read here, and smile to think you know not my severer punishments ! Gracious God ! whether within thy heaven of heavens thou sittest, clothed in everlasting light and bliss, or from the living centre of creation sendest thy merciful and inquiring eye through the vast universe, the work of thy Almighty breath, Oh ! hear my prayer ! From this fiend who now gnaws my heart, and is never absent from my dungeon of death, deliver, for a moment, the most miserable of thy creatures. My guilt is undeserving of forgiveness, but let thy pity grant me some intermission from his fury. From hell he came, from that hell to which my eternal spirit is too surely doomed. Am I then, am I—

damned !

damned! Oh! what horrible perdition is mine! Hell, hell! I know your torments, I see, I feel your terrours! your Stygian gulph yawns at my feet, and within I behold your grisly king on his fiery throne! A crown of blazing bitumen marks his dread state, and vice, envy, malice, anger, jealousy, fear, discontent, and hate, his progeny and his ministers, are at his feet. But the fiend within my bosom, prime pest of Satan, is a plague still more damnable than these!

"Yes, yes, I have looked into the bottomless pit! I totter this moment on its brink! now! now! now! A river of fire flows through the abyss; torrents, cataracts, and tempests rage within its dismal vaults! I see, I see the damned—whirled from punishment to punishment, from worse pain to pain still worse, from

agony to agony, from rage to rage, through an inexhaustible and infinite variety of torments! But that flaming spot so intolerably red! Oh! that spot! and hark! those troops of demons! each of whom would make paradise a hell, how they shriek! how they shriek beneath the sulphureous concave! as with their brazen forks they rake the eternal, penal fires, and ring the accursed chaldrons! Hark their tremendous roar! which spreads dismay to every ghost in hell, and shakes the earth! Hark! Aminta! The devils' yell—incestuous fratricide! Lo! This spot is thine! This spot! This! This!"

These images of guilt and terrour were too horrible for the gentle Julia. Her enthusiasm was unequal to support her under their powerful impression. Her reliance on the divine protection was extinguished by

by the vivid and shocking phantasms of the frenetic Aminta. Buried in unknown and subterranean chambers, where eternal night, death-like silence, and withering desolation reigned; the very theatre, she believed, of mystery; the cave, she knew, of murder; the haunt, she suspected, of impiety and enchantment; the recess, she feared, of ruffianism and ravishment;—Who removed my candle? thought she. Who sighed in the distant vault? who is Lonchiderimos? whence came the necklace? who cried "Ha!" when I removed the ball?

A universal shivering seized her. Were she at that moment possessed of the secrets of the philosopher's stone and *elixir vitæ;* were she endowed with the means of bestowing on her father and on Theodore immortality, inexhaustible riches,

and eternal happiness, she would have willingly relinquished the wondrous powers to be once again within the belfry. Never, never, said she to herself, shall I see the light of day! A restlessness inseparable from excessive fear, caused her to turn her head. It was now, she knew, the hour of midnight, when all but the wicked sleep, and when charnel-houses and church-yards send forth their sheeted dead; when murderers steal on their victims, and when the murdered rise as bloody spectres. She turned her head. Good God! that spectacle! Protecting Powers, preserve the unhappy girl! At such a time, and in such a place, to see that, which, in a crowded theatre, or on a market-day, in the open street of a populous town, might, like the head of Medusa, petrify a beholder! Incapable of motion, fixed as a statue, her blood

blood congealed in her veins—her bosom heaving—she gazed upon it in speechless horrour.

On the floor was an open coffin, and sitting within it was a human figure, whose ghastly head rested on a stone bench. Its face was turned towards the quaking Julia. Eyes it had none; a corpse it was. Its skin, now of a dark brown, in part remained, but the flesh was gone, and many of the bones appeared. It was dressed in a strange and antique female fashion, and was attached to the wall by a long and massy chain. The teeth, the sockets of the eyes, and the jaw-bones were bare. No object could be more shocking save that which was on its right. This was the remains of an infant, within a cage, which had been forged of immense bars. The creature within it had perished apparently for want of room. A part of its face still

remained, and any thing so hideous, so pitiable, cannot be conceived. Such was the spectacle.

There, suspected Julia, is Aminta in the coffin, upon the humid floor of this black and abominable dungeon, and that is her infant in the cage. Misery in its worst shape—mortality in its direst form, never before appeared so dreadful. The total decay of human grandeur—the most disgusting effects of time and dampness on animal matter—the pains of a cruel death—the violence and concealment of premeditated murders, and all the mystery of crime, presented themselves to her mind. The terrible words she had just translated, and the imprecations on the silk, had filled her mind with the apprehensions of signal suffering on this earth, and of endless vengeance hereafter. They had revived in her memory what she had ever read or heard

heard of future retribution, of hell-fire, of Satan, of his imps, and of damnation.

The skeletons before her connected her with the sepulchre that entombed them, and with the infernal regions of which it seemed the porch. Silence, darkness, and solitude, death, murder, incest, and eternal condemnation, all were here united. It was not within the scope of human daring to translate another word. Julia, the breathing picture of alarm, offered to Heaven a mental ejaculation, and withdrew her looks. She would have crossed herself, but she had not power to stir a finger. Her candle, she fancied, yielded a blue light, and the vapours of the cavern a smell, in part putrescent, and in part sulphureous. She was ready to sink to the ground, and expected every instant to see the arch-fiend himself, the very devil rise before

her, lightnings to flash, and thunders to peal around. She bent her eyes fearfully on her writing-box.

It was open, and she chanced to look at the mirror which lay within its cover—when—Oh! how to relate it? The reflection of a man's head and neck, both uncovered, and leaning over her shoulder, struck her tortured sight. Such a countenance! It seemed intently employed in reading what she had translated. Matted black locks and a shaggy beard, a squalid skin and gaping mouth, a rolling eye and frowning brows, a wrinkled forehead and hollow cheeks, gave to this mysterious head, which was moreover gigantic in its proportions, all the appearance of brutal strength, invincible ferocity, and incurable madness. It was the head of a maniac whose insanity breathed the

most alarming violence. Grinning hideously, and rolling with pernicious glare his black and baleful eyes, the madman seized the expiring Julia, and at the same time sent through all the arches of those accursed caverns, a shout, than which the roar of the famished tiger in the desert, sounds not to the benighted and unarmed traveller more loud, more terrible.

The skeleton disturbed from its coffin by a kick from the lunatic, rolled frightfully towards the marble table. Its arms embraced the feet of Julia. The chain clanked. The iron cage swung across the vault. The bones of the child separated and fell together in a heap. The echoes of the shout reverberated among the distant passages. The crisis of horrour has arrived. Miss Bolton falls lifeless.

The sun had just risen from the eastern

wave, dispelling with his chearful looks obscurity and sadness. The birds, awakened by his enlivening rays, had joined in tuneful symphony to hail his bright career. Night was no more, and all nature smiled, when Julia recovered from her trance, but the disturbance of fear and the colour of sickness still sat upon her countenance. As when a man, in appearance dead, is interred, and after his sepulture revives; he opens his eyes, but he is in utter darkness—he tries to move, but his limbs are bound in a cloth, and enclosed in a narrow box. He wonders where he is, and yet is instinctively unwilling to reflect on his situation; but the dreadful truth soon flashes on his brain. He knows he is in his winding-sheet, and buried in the church-yard. He cries—he shrieks. Alas! his cries, his shrieks are uttered in the grave.

grave. No mortal hears him. He exerts his strength—he lifts the lid of his coffin—he shakes the earth above, but already suffocation seizes him. No human force can raise the ponderous and smothering encumbrance. He falls back into—his coffin—he groans, and dies. So Julia, with a vague and undefined conception of some monstrous perils, feared to look, she knew not why, and dreaded to think, she knew not wherefore. The events of the night before passed like the fleeting images of a delirious dream through her disordered mind, and it was some time before she could summon courage enough to open her eyes. She thought, and she shuddered as she thought, that she was immured with Aminta, for ever, in the sepulchre. At length she ventured to steal a look. She was alone, and, oh blissful circumstance!

in

in her own room. She was in bed, though not undressed. She tried to recall her scattered thoughts, and in the court-yard, beneath her loop-hole windows, she heard the uncouth voices of the outlaws.

Relieved from much of her perturbation by these sounds, and cheered by the rays of the sun that gilded a portion of her floor, she soon became composed enough to recollect all that had passed the night before. She trembled at the remembrance, and tried, in vain, to account for her removal from the cavern. Her writing-box was on the floor and closed, and near it were the worked silk and the box of money. She looked about. She was safe. She moved her limbs and her head. She was not hurt. Extreme debility of body, and a painful anxiety of mind were the only effects of her adventure.

She

She arose. She opened the smaller box. It was full of gold coin, and its weight was about eight pounds. She then raised the lid of the writing-box, and within it she found all in proper order. Her pocket-book, in which she had begun to render the inscription into English, lay uppermost, and this she opened with a sigh of regret that she had not been able to translate the whole. But wonder and mystery were not yet exhausted. After her last line there was written :—

" Poor soul ! to recompense you for the terrour I occasioned you, I shall complete the task that you began. The story of Aminta's sufferings, greater than my own, has for a moment dispelled my frenzy. I am a poor maniac, it is true. I know my brain is turned. My foster-brother and I inhabit the ruins of Count Egfryd's castle.

He

He is a gardener. He is faithful, tender, and affectionate. Never in my most frantick moments have I offered him any violence. By accident I discovered the caverns communicating from the castle to the island. In them I live. Hunger alone has power to draw me from them. My food devoured, I return to them, and in their cold and midnight solitude my melancholy finds a horrible satisfaction. The necklace I gave you was my Eliza's. It was given her by the Queen of France, whose favourite she was. Love and religion made her mine, but violence and fraud robbed me of my jewel. Could I support the loss and retain my reason? No one ever sees me but my foster-brother, and he not oftener than once in the week. But now to finish your translation. May you continue insensible until I shall have placed it at your bed-side, and

and effected my retreat! To behold me a second time might cause your death. I am Lonchiderimos, king of the sable caves, formerly the Chevalier Du Lange. Ha! ha! but those times are gone. Now, mysterious marble, what sayest thou?

"Robbed by death of the fostering cares of a parent, I was yet an infant, when my guardian, the cruellest of women, the barbarous *Duchesse D'Auvignac*, took me to this castle. My fortune was immense, my beauty was universally acknowledged, and my accomplishments were rare and estimable. I was the subject of general praise, and sovereign princes were proud to confess my power. Wherever I appeared, wealth and pleasure abounded, and my smiles, like the brightness of a morning in May, seemed to diffuse general content and pleasure. Gaiety and I were one,

one, when, by the artful contrivances of the *Duchesse*, I was seduced to marry her son, the *Duc D'Auvignac*.

"I was then but sixteen, and I must acknowledge that my happiness continued undiminished for two years afterwards. The young, the gallant, the beauteous Albert, at this period came to our castle, and, for the first time in my life, a sigh of uneasiness escaped from my bosom. His reputation in arms, his noble carriage, his manly countenance, his dignified deportment, his insinuating manners, his eloquent conversation, fascinated my attention and won my respect and regard. He always looked at me, methought, with tenderness, and whenever he addressed me, the tones of his voice were softened into a cadence that penetrated to my heart. But it was not long till the colour deserted his cheeks.

cheeks. He sought solitude and retirement. Involuntary sighs would issue from him, and sometimes, as he would steal a glance at me, I could observe a tear start into his brilliant eye. I believed that he loved me, and I pitied him for the misery which I occasioned him. I thought incessantly of the amiable stranger. I was agitated and unhappy. Sentiments before unknown to me were awakened in my breast, and I dreaded to reflect on the warmth of my emotions.

"Too well, too soon, he read my secret, and by a thousand little cares and artifices, invisible and unknown to all the world but myself, he kindled the spark of affection into a raging and inextinguishable flame. Love is fertile in resources, and I was ere long the most criminal of women.

"The *Duchesse* suspected our intrigue, and,

and, in the absence of my husband at court, she obtained proof of my guilt. She immediately despatched a courier to him with the shocking intelligence. He, being naturally violent, was cast by the information into a state of unspeakable fury. Boiling with jealousy, revenge and rage, he arrived at this castle, and plunged a stiletto into the heart of my lover. He then stabbed me with the same weapon, and immediately afterwards he struck it into his own breast. The ill-fated Albert and he instantly expired, but unfortunately, my wound was not mortal.

" A livid mark, of a triangular shape, having been found on the neck of the amiable and now lifeless stranger when his vest had been removed, it occurred to my mother-in-law, that this might be Gonflair, my younger brother, who, at the age of

two

two years, had, during an irruption of Bavarians, been taken away, and had never afterwards been heard of. Gonflair, she knew, had come into the world with a similar mark upon his neck; and the proper inquiries having been made by her, it was ascertained that the deceased had, in fact, been seized by a foraging party of Bavarians, some eighteen years before, in a country-house, which, by the description, proved to be my father's; that becoming a favourite of General Wolfskynk, he had been adopted by him under the name of Albert; and that he had been ushered into the world by the general as his son.

"The *Duchesse* having gathered these facts, flew to me with the countenance of a tigress. I was then pregnant. 'Oh! most infamous of women!' said she, 'incestuous and adulterous concubine of your own

own brother! murderer of him and of my beloved son, your husband! mother of a bastard, who is at once your child and your sister, if it be female; if male, your brother! a monstrous and accursed creature, that will be a reproach to our sex, and a disgrace to human nature!' She then, with malicious exactness, expatiated on the heinousness of my conduct, and, to my inexpressible sorrow, proved to me the certainty of my incest. I swooned away.

"On recovering I found myself in this cavern, chained to that wall, and sitting in this coffin. The *Duchesse* was at my side. 'Behold your prison,' cried she, in a voice that made me shudder; 'here you shall perish. That well in the floor will yield you water, and through that hole in the ceiling, your bread will every week be dropped to you. But, to aggravate your sufferings,

sufferings, you shall sometimes be liberated for a few hours. Twice in the year you shall appear in my banquetting hall. I will represent you to the world as a devotee employed incessantly in prayer. I have already caused it to be believed that your husband and your brother fell in a duel occasioned by a political dispute. But should you, when I shew you to my guests, disclose the secret of your confinement, the flesh shall be torn from your bones; and, that you should not deceive yourself by trusting to my pity, know that once in every month you shall be scourged with these hands.'

"Saying this, the inhuman woman inflicted on me a discipline that caused me to swoon for very pain. Her threat has ever since been carried into execution with barbarous punctuality. The period of

of my delivery being nigh, she attended me herself, and placed my infant in the steel cage. She then, by means of springs, prepared in a particular manner, fastened the two bars which she had removed for its admission, so that all my efforts to liberate the poor innocent should prove ineffectual.

"The sufferings of the baby could not be seen, even by her, with indifference. Since his birth I have been compelled to ascend, by a ladder of ropes, to an upper dungeon, to receive my monthly castigation. To enable me to do so, she lengthened my chain. For two years I kept life in my child, but the straightness of his hellish prison at length killed him; and I, a prey to guilt, remorse, and terrour, have now survived him three years. With nought besides my bread have I, down to the present

sent moment been supplied, save a spoon, a knife, oil for my lamp, and the coarsest woollen clothing. The silk that I embroidered I happened to have accidentally in my pocket. Much longer I cannot live. The punishments I suffer, the privations I undergo, and the agony of my mind, must soon terminate my days, now too long protracted.

" Do thou, pious stranger, with the money which I found in the cavity behind the marble table, purchase masses for the redemption of mine and my infant's souls, and for the repose of my brother. May thy spirit, in return, enjoy eternal felicity! But remember to keep my story secret. The honour of a noble family demands this. Destroy the plaster on which these words are carved, and burn the silken ball.

God and the saints preserve thee always! Amen, sweet Jesus!"

Julia, after reading this, felt herself so ill that she was glad to return to bed. There she, in some time, fell into an unquiet sleep, during which her father (who, on awaking in the morning, had found himself much recovered) entered her room. Perceiving that she was asleep, he would not disturb her, but his attention being attracted by the wrought silk and the pocket-book, he took them up and read them.

CHAP. V.

As when the Pyrenean wolf, impell'd
By hunger and by thirst of blood, doth rush
With horrid rage in quest of human prey:
So I, to feed my great revenge, with eyes
Inflam'd, and curses loud, shall dart on them,
My purpose cruel, fierce, and ravenous.

.....

Angels of bliss! that help the weak, and guard
The innocent, assist our enterprise!
Or chains and death, or liberty and life
Await our bold attempt.

.....

E'en as the thunder-struck clown, who finds,
When day resumes his joyous face, and clouds
Retire, that what had lately scar'd his wits,
Innoxious pass'd, and left no trace behind,
And in his joy forgets his recent dread.

Mr. Bolton was some minutes before he could recover from the effects of his astonishment at the information he had acquired. As he sat musing and motionless his daughter awoke. The sight of her father tranquillized her speedily. She was delighted to perceive an amendment in his

looks, and she was no less delighted to find that he had, by accident, learned the horrible secret. Reserve and mystery had been all her life unknown to her, and the concealment of her late discovery had given her the most painful agitation. They conversed for more than an hour on the subject of the subterranean passage, of the maniac, and of Aminta. They deliberated on the mode of proceeding that they had best adopt, and they resolved to disclose all to the outlaws, and to seek, by their assistance, to effect an escape from the *Isle de Peine.*

"I knew the *Chevalier du Lange,*" said Mr. Bolton, "when I was in Paris, about twenty years ago. He was then young, gay, handsome, elegant, and accomplished. He moved in the first circles, and swayed the sceptre of fashion. The men imitated

and

and envied him. The women admired and extolled him. Miss Stuart, a maid of honour to the Queen, received his vows and returned his passion; but their attachment was for a long time unknown and unsuspected. His family were Calvinists, and she was a Roman Catholick. His father was a man of immense wealth, and she possessed little besides beauty and noble blood. There were obstacles to their union that a man, less enamoured, and less ardent than the *Chevalier du Lange,* would have thought insurmountable; but he was not to be discouraged by any difficulties. He proposed a clandestine marriage, and she had not resolution enough to oppose his wish. She stole from her attendants. She fled from the palace. She met her lover, and the ceremony, which was to unite them indissolubly, had been already begun, when

the persons sent in pursuit of her surprised them and prevented it. She was brought back a prisoner, and he was forbid by the king to enter Paris.

" All this the young man endured with patience, hoping, I suppose, to be able, at some future day, to effect the object of his wishes; but, in about six months afterwards, Miss Stuart was prevailed on to marry the Marquis Soulainviers, an old courtier and favourite. The unexpected event was immediately communicated to the unfortunate Du Lange, and the shock it gave him was so violent that it bereft him of his reason. All Paris was interested in his fate, and there were few who did not pity and condemn his mistress. I recollect the circumstances perfectly well, but since that time having been principally in England, I have never heard more either of him

him or her. But now, my child, let us seek the outlaws, and obtain, if possible, their assistance."

Julia and her father, both weak and both unwell, descended to the refectory. The banditti were all there. "My friends," said Mr. Bolton, "I have something to communicate which I hope will prove of advantage to us all. I think I have discovered a mode by which we may effect our escape from this island. I require your assistance. Exclusive of the pecuniary rewards I shall bestow on you, if you effect my liberation (and among you I will divide twelve thousand livres *), I undertake to procure for each of you a full pardon from the Government. I have sufficient interest with it, I assure you, to obtain a much greater favour than this."

* About six hundred pounds sterling.

He then related, succinctly, the mysterious voice he had heard which demanded the letters of attorney; that his daughter and he had deemed it prudent to comply with the requisition; and that the papers had, shortly after they were placed on the mantle-piece, been removed from it. He told the manner in which Miss Bolton had discovered the circular staircase, and all that had happened to her during her first visit to the cavern. He omitted not to narrate how the silken ball, the necklace, and the pencilled paper came into her possession. He had brought them down with him. He read the paper, and he translated aloud the words wrought in the silk. He mentioned the loss of the candle in the cavern, the terrifying noises his daughter had heard there, and the frightful

spectacle

spectacle she had seen. As he spoke of the spectacle Julia involuntarily laid hold of him and turned pale.

Mr. Bolton continued. He informed them of her second descent, and of what had passed during that dreadful visit. He then read to them the translation of the inscription, from her pocket-book. "This," added he, "is the box of gold, which you will share among you. I hesitate not to give it, nor to reveal to you the secrets of Aminta, because, without your assistance, her dying injunctions cannot be obeyed; and without a full disclosure to you of every circumstance that has come to my knowledge, I should not be able to obtain your assistance, nor perhaps should I deserve it. Her gold I bestow on you, because it will inspire you, I hope, with ardour in her cause; and because, once

liberated, I shall apply the amount of it, more than doubled, to the purposes she desires. We have, I think, to fear none but the maniac, for I am almost sure that our persecutor, the Count Egfryd, is now employed at a distance with the two letters of attorney. He may rob us of a hundred and twenty thousand pounds sterling, but, thank God! I shall still have more than enough of property."

The outlaws heard him with attention, and swore to do as he should direct them. Having divided the gold among their party, each armed himself, as did likewise Mr. Bolton, with a cutlass, a dagger, and a pair of pistols. Garquine thrust a carving-knife into her girdle.

Mr. Bolton desired them to take nothing with them besides their arms but lights, a heavy hammer, and a rope. They had, fortunately,

fortunately, a parcel of torches, which the gloomy and intricate passages of the cloister had rendered necessary, and a sledge. Hénoch Oguelauche, the strongest of the banditti, carried the sledge and the rope (which were merely a provision against casualties), and ten *flambeaux* were borne by the others.

The order of their march was this. Jacot led the way. Jacques Ferrau and Dissart followed him. The next was Garquine. Julia, leaning on her father, kept close to that abominable hag; and Hénoch Oguelauche and Marco closed the procession. They were eight in all. Having arrived at the belfry, they proceeded to the summit of the spiral stairs. These were too narrow to admit of more than one person. During their descent, therefore, they went singly. Mr. Bolton was the sixth, Julia the seventh,

and Marco the last of the party on the stairs. Having reached the ground, they resumed their former order, and after a pause, occasioned by dizziness, they directed their course to the narrow passage which Julia had traversed twice before.

The blaze from the ten torches illuminated the cavern through its whole extent. They advanced quickly along the passage until they came to the iron door that had opposed the progress of Miss Bolton. As she crossed the entrance to Aminta's sepulchral chamber, she averted her eyes in dismay, and pressed against her father. Each of the banditti tried in vain to stir the iron door, or to find a key-hole in it.

"Hénoch, apply your sledge," said Mr. Bolton. Hénoch, who had been a smith, waited not for a repetition of the order, but

but with extreme violence hurled his ponderous instrument against the opposing metal. The noise of the mighty blow spread through the vaults like the sound of a *petard* discharged at a city gate. The iron door, however, yielded not in the least. It was of immense weight and thickness, and had been hammered into its present shape. Hénoch repeated his blows, but his assaults were useless. Miss Bolton's fears increased to a painful excess. Her father and the outlaws waited anxiously for the effect of Hénoch's exertions, but his efforts were unavailing. The door was not to be broken, and it could not be removed.

"Let us explore some other passage," cried Mr. Bolton; "this cannot be forced." They turned back accordingly, in obedience to his direction, and soon arrived

rived at the entrance to Aminta's dungeon. "Hénoch and Ferrau, enter this vault," said he, "and ascertain if it present any mode of escape." The two entered, and whatever fears they might have felt, they had the strength of mind to conquer, or the prudence to conceal. They remained within it about five minutes, and on their return to the passage declared that they had been able to find no mode of departure, and that the opening into the upper dungeon, mentioned by Aminta, had been closed with a rough and immoveable block of stone. "A passage to the ruined castle on the continent there is somewhere," observed their respectable leader, "and probably there is more than one of them, let us therefore continue our research."

It were tedious to describe the course of

of each winding, the depth of each recess, the situation of each chamber in the caverns, the conjectures and the fears, the hopes and the disappointments, of the adventurous party. Suffice it that they met no living being, friend or foe, and that every secret passage of retreat escaped their observation. Vexed and dispirited, they returned to the belfry, extinguished their torches, laid aside their arms, and yielded their minds to wonder and discontent.

The Count had, the day before, arrived at his cottage from England, and, on his arrival, he heard that *Monsieur Froigné*, about whom he had left orders to have inquiries made, was Mr. Dalbert; that a raft of singular construction had been prepared under his directions; and that it was to be launched that very night. The intelligence

telligence was not a little strange and perplexing to him. It was certain that Mr. Dalbert had, in some inexplicable manner, discovered the place where his mistress was confined, and the danger that would attend any attempt to enter by the canal. Hated and feared before, Theodore was now an object of aggravated terrour and detestation. As soon as it becomes dark, resolved the arch-impostor, I will visit the ruined cloister on the island, and will watch the proceedings of my enemy. Let him escape me if he can.

The moon shone brightly. He descended into the caverns, and passed without delay to the unlighted and unwindowed chamber where the spiral stairs terminated their windings. On treading the upper step, as he hasted forward, he stirred a board placed there by the banditti, which board they had

had made to communicate, by a thread, with a small bell in the refectory. The Count, not suspecting his danger, advanced, by a passage within the walls, to a distant room, from which he could command a view of *Monsieur Froigné's* cottage and the river, while the outlaws, warned of the arrival of a stranger by the ringing of the bell, stole silently to the belfry, with a fixed resolution to attack and seize the invader. Garquine carried a couple of flaming torches. Each of the others was armed. They entered the belfry and arrived at the windowless chamber. Having in the course of that evening strown some fine sand over its floor, they were now enabled to trace the marks of a man's feet, and to ascertain that the person who had entered had not yet retreated.

"My advice to you," said Garquine, "is this.

this. As we have got my gentleman here, snug and certain as I may say, let us close up this narrow passage with boards, which will prevent him, be him never so cunning, from getting away from us." The advice was approved of, and the narrow stairs were in a few minutes barred against all regress. The party then extinguished their *flambeaux*, and in a corner waited silently for their prey.

The Count was not long in his hiding-place till he saw, through a fissure in the wall, some large body that he conjectured was the raft, of which he had been apprized, approach the island. It appeared to come from the place where the fireworks had been exhibited, and ere long, to his infinite surprise, it moved slowly over the morass. The Count was pleased to see it advance. A diabolical satisfaction filled his breast.

Now,

Now, said he to himself, I shall be able, by one act, to destroy all the people on earth whom I fear, save one. That one is Pierre Dontache, but he can easily be removed at any other time. Gaspar Pontgebre is no more; Marie de Solase is no more; the villain Bolton is no more; Conrad D'Aufrine is no more; and here are assembled the haughty Julia and her father, the six outlaws whom I employed to seize and guard them, and that abhorred Theodore. Here they all are, but never shall individual among them see the morning.

While these thoughts were revolving in his wicked mind, twelve persons landed from the raft and hastened to the ruins. The Count having viewed them for a few minutes, retreated rapidly through his secret passages, intending to descend to the cavern,

cavern, there to prepare for the consummation of his iniquity. He arrived without interruption near to the circular winding staircase, and touched the upper part of the stone newel round which the steps turned. He expected in a few minutes to reach the subterranean passages, when, to his utter astonishment and alarm, he found the passage stopped up with pieces of timber. He now knew that his visit had been expected, and he feared that he was at that instant surrounded by his mortal foes.

His existence and his character were in the utmost peril. His presence of mind and his intrepidity did not forsake him upon the trying occasion. With the velocity of urgent need, quickened by implacable vengeance, he drew from his coat-pockets and cocked a pair of pistols, each of which contained three barrels. His blood

blood boiled in his veins. Having thus prepared himself against surprise, he placed the pistols in his bosom, and proceeded impetuously to withdraw the pieces of timber from the staircase. He had already removed three when he heard the steps of persons approaching.

He again caught his pistols. In each hand he held one, and directing them to the quarter from which the noise came, he pulled the triggers. Four of the six barrels were discharged at the moment, and four bullets of lead shot forth with murderous intention. Being fired in the dark, the party in ambush escaped their killing violence. No wound was inflicted except one in Hénoch's side. It drew from him a roar, but he was not dangerously hurt. The flashes, which for a moment illuminated the chamber, enabled the Count to see the

number of his enemies, who, unintimidated by the shots, and the cry of Hénoch, rushed furiously forward.

Egfryd, not having time to discharge the other two bullets, liberated, by moving a little spring, a bayonet which was attached to each pistol, but scarcely had he done so when he was rudely grappled by four of the ruffians. He exerted his utmost force, he kicked, he pushed, he strove, he stabbed, but their united strength rendered all his efforts ineffectual. A blow in the stomach completed his defeat. He was seized; he was disarmed; he was dragged to the refectory.

Theodore and his party, in the mean time, had crossed the morass. The mode he adopted for this purpose I shall relate for the instruction of any person who may hereafter be in similar circumstances.

Having

Having got a strong rope of sufficient length, one end of it was fastened to the gate of his cottage, and the remainder, being coiled up in a large eight-oared boat, was conveyed round the island even to the spot whence the boat had departed. The island being thus embraced, both ends of the rope were drawn, until no part of it was slack, by a powerful windlass erected at the cottage. This done, Theodore, his servant Guillame, and ten other men, all well armed, embarked on a raft that had been previously prepared.

By pulling at that part of the rope which passed from the windlass to the eastern side of the *Isle de Peine*, they drew themselves to the island, and their vessel being peculiarly light, they found no difficulty in passing thus over a great portion of the morass. When they could go no further

on

on it in this manner, each of the ten men resorted to a contrivance invented by Theodore, which was simply an improvement on the snow-shoe of Lapland. Though broader and larger than the snow-shoe, it was lighter, and being strapped on each foot, a man could trust himself on the softest fen without any danger of being suffocated in it. He might gradually sink, it is true, if he stood still, but not more than five or six inches in a minute.

Thus provided, the ten could stand for a little while on the morass, and from their stations push the raft forward. The raft was formed of whalebone and varnished canvas. It was twenty feet long, twenty feet wide, and eighteen inches deep. Its weight was only two hundred and forty pounds. When any one of the men found himself sinking too deeply, he had nothing more

more to do than to raise himself for a minute upon the raft, and clean his shoes from the mud they had gathered.

In this slow and laborious manner they reached firm land, when, taking up their arms, and laying aside their morass-shoes, they hurried to the ruins, leaving two of their party (hid behind a large rock, with six double-barrelled guns) to guard the raft.

They reached the refectory a few minutes before the banditti led in the Count. The first thing that attracted Theodore's attention was a heap of torches. He ordered some of them to be quickly lighted, and was going in quest of the two prisoners, his mistress and her father, surprised that neither they nor any of the outlaws appeared, when the latter entered with Egfryd. Each of Theodore's party had a

scimitar and four pistols. They were all men of tried resolution. The banditti had been prepared by Mr. Bolton for some attempt, on the part of Mr. Dalbert, to rescue him and his daughter, and therefore the appearance of ten armed men in the refectory excited no great share of wonder or apprehension in their minds. Theodore's party waited in silence for his orders how to act, but he was satisfied on seeing the Count a prisoner, that the outlaws were not hostile to him. He looked at the miscreant without emotion, he thought only of Julia.

"You have, I see, secured the base and unmanly persecutor of Miss Bolton, and you shall be rewarded for it," said he; "but where is she? where is that much-injured young lady? where is my worthy friend, her father?"—"Both in their own rooms,

or

or in the cupola, I dare say," answered Jacques Ferrau. " The occurrences of this morning must have rendered repose necessary to them; and, no doubt, the shots fired by our noble visitor here, just now, must have terrified them not a little; but I will conduct them to you in a minute." As he uttered these words he snatched a torch, and ran up the decayed steps. " Guard well your prisoner," cried Theodore to those who held the Count, " and wait in silence till Mr. Bolton shall determine his fate and declare your reward."

Indignation, wrath, and hatred convulsed the features of Egfryd. His artifices unsuccessful, his pride humbled, his vengeance frustrated, and disgrace and death impending over him, what must have been the tempest of his passions? Theodore deigned not to look at him. Mr. Bolton

and Julia appeared. She flew into the arms of her lover, and her father, placing a hand on the head of each, bestowed on them his kindliest benedictions.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Meanwhile with rising rage the battle glows,
The tumult thickens, and the clamour grows.

. . . . . .

Oh! that annihilation were a god
To hear my prayers! then should each living thing
Be straight involv'd in universal ruin.

. . . . . .

Quasi ascosi avea gli occhi ne la testa,
La faccia macra, e come un' osso asciutta,
La chioma rabbuffata, orrida, e mesta,
La barba folta, spaventosa, e brutta.

. . . . . .

Nulla Amazone mai su 'l Termodonte
Imbracciò scudo, ò maneggiò bipenne
Audace sì, com' ella———

. . . . . .

On voit en un instant des abîmes ouverts,
Des noirs torrens de soufre épandus dans les airs.

"LET us fly from this abhorred island," said Julia. "That vessel which we saw from the cupola, and in which, Theodore, I suppose you landed with those men, can convey us hence, can it not?"—"It can,

and it was for that purpose that the raft you saw was constructed. Let us away—" —" Stay," cried Mr. Bolton, " a moment. I perceive that my acquaintances of the *Isle de Peine* have found and secured the enemy of us all. I promised to each of them, on my liberation, two thousand livres. I now repeat that promise. I undertake to procure for them a full pardon ; and provided that they bring Count Egfryd a prisoner to your cottage on the bank of the river, I here pledge my honour to advance an additional gift to each of a thousand livres. The outlaws testified their pleasure by expressions of respect and attachment, accompanied with vehement gesticulation, and swore that that fiend of darkness, so they termed the Count, should never escape from them. " As soon as you have landed, Sir," said Jacques, " send back

back the raft to us, and we shall convey our prisoner on it from hence this very night."—"It shall be so," returned Theodore. "In three hours you may expect it back."

Theodore and his party of nine, with Julia and her father, were now retiring. Julia passed the Count without looking at him. She shuddered to be so near him though he was a prisoner, and though she was protected by her father and her lover. The villain's arms were held by Marco and Dissart. But his ingenuity and address were superiour to their caution and their strength. He drew, unobserved, from a concealed pocket, a small pistol, which, as the party were retiring (lighted by three *flambeaux*), he discharged at them. He intended the shot for Theodore, but it missed him. The bullet entered the neck

of Mr. Bolton. "I am shot!" exclaimed the father of Julia. "The villain has shot me!" The fright and agitation of Miss Bolton on this occasion exceeded all that she had ever suffered. The rage of her lover amounted almost to madness, and the indignation of the outlaws was unbounded. They would have instantly put the perfidious Egfryd to death, but that the worthy Mr. Bolton desired earnestly he might not be hurt. "Justice will overtake him soon enough," said the good man, in the true spirit of Christianity. The treacherous assassin was spared, but the pistol was wrested from him, his pockets were searched lest he should have any more concealed arms, and his hands and legs were secured in a better manner than they had been before.

"Lay me down here," said Mr. Bolton, "I can-

"I cannot stir. My wound is not mortal, perhaps; but motion to me at present would be death." None present had the least skill in surgery. They could only apply a bandage of linen, and endeavour in this manner to stop the bleeding. "We must send to Cognac for a surgeon," observed Theodore. "Do you, Guillaume, take seven of my men with you on the raft, and procure one with as much expedition as possible. He shall be rewarded most liberally for his trouble; and, my Julia," added he, "as you can be of no service here, had you not better accompany them, and escape from this scene of horrour? I shall not quit my friend."—"No, never will I leave my father!" cried the affectionate girl. "Here will I stay; here will I attend him."

Guillaume and the seven men did as

they were ordered; and the banditti, with the other three men, forced the prisoner to an upper room, in order that the wounded gentleman might not be disturbed. None remained with him but Theodore and Julia. Of Theodore's men there were now only three in the cloister, and it was manifest to the Count that this was the only opportunity he was likely to have for attempting his nefarious designs. To one of the outlaws who held his arms, he said in a whisper—"I will shew you gold that I have in the cavern to the amount of three hundred thousand livres*, and a secret passage to convey you thence, if you will assist me against my enemies." The villain to whom he whispered thought the offer eligible, and he whispered it to another. Thus it went round, and looks of acquiescence

* About 15,000l. sterling.

cence and approbation began to be exchanged, when Jacques Ferrau thus spoke aloud:—

"Look ye, Count Egfryd, it wont do. It is our interest to be honest on the present occasion, and I will prove it to all who hear me. In the first place, before we could stir in your service, we should have to secure or kill Mr. Dalbert below; and his men who are here present. Now, they happen to be all well armed, and it is therefore doubtful that we should succeed; but were we successful, it would be probably at the expence of half our number. Then we enter the cavern with you, where, for aught we know, we should perish under the blows of some party that you may have stationed there, or by some infernal contrivance that we could neither understand nor guard against. But sup-

posing that there were no dangers of this kind, still we should run the risk of being tricked or deceived by you, in getting the gold you speak of, and afterwards you would employ your wicked arts, night and day, to find some mode of taking us off. Your interest and security would demand our deaths, and we should certainly be murdered. But, by keeping you a prisoner, we ensure our pardons; we gratify our hatred and revenge against you; we get a large and certain reward from Mr. Bolton or from Mr. Dalbert; and we incur no danger whatsoever; therefore, Sir, you will remain, if you please, in close custody where you are."

The ruffians attended to this address, and were so well pleased with it, that, as soon as it was concluded, they uttered a loud huzza, and at the same time twirled round their

their hats. He who held the prisoner's right arm did so like the others, and Egfryd, who was one of the strongest and most active of men, taking advantage of the circumstance, by a prodigious effort, broke the cord which tied his hands, and disengaged himself from the men about him. One he knocked down, two he tripped backwards so that they fell, and another he pushed into the ancient fire-place. Then, rushing to an opening, that had formerly been a window, he threw himself out. The ground was thirty feet below him, but he broke his fall by catching at a projecting stone gutter. He alighted on his feet without hurt, and flew to the canal. Of the men who witnessed this action, not one had courage to leap from the opening. They fired their pistols at him, but without any

any effect, and they ran down the decayed stairs in order to pursue him.

Theodore hurried out of the refectory to learn the cause of the shots, and was informed of the prisoner's escape. "He is gone to the causeway," said Jacques Ferrau, almost out of breath, "to blow us all up." The conjecture of Jacques was well founded. The proud and vitious Egfryd could not support the opprobrium of his detection, and he wished to involve those whom he most hated in his final destruction. Theodore was acquainted with his character, and had no doubt that such was his intention. "Let us fly, my good fellows," cried he, "to prevent his desperate intent!"

They took the nearest course to the canal. A person swimming through it was visible

visible at some distance. Three, who were the best swimmers of the party, immediately threw off their shoes, coats, hats, and vests, and plunged into the water. The rest pushed out the boat, seized the oars, and rowed after the fugitive with all their might.

The Count had already arrived near to the spot where he might execute his hellish purpose. The three swimmers were far behind, but the boat gained on him. Arrived within twenty yards of him, six pistols were fired from it at the same moment. Two bullets reached him. One struck him in the hip, the other in the leg. He was disabled from swimming further. Six yards more, and he would have reached the fatal spot, where the strings and rods communicated with the gunpowder in the cavity beneath the causeway. Bleeding and in pain, but haughty and audacious, he was forced

forced into the boat; and the three being likewise taken into it, they all returned to the little haven where it had been moored.

Theodore desired the Count's wounds to be attended to, and his clothes to be dried. "No," said the villain, "my wounds shall not be dressed, and I require no dry clothes." The other, shocked at the desperation and reprobacy that appeared in his countenance, ordered the men to guard their prisoner with particular vigilance, and he returned to the refectory.

Miss Bolton had felt excessive terrour during his absence, but her father seemed somewhat recovered. Both his daughter and Theodore entertained hopes that the wound which he had received in the neck was not dangerous. It had ceased to bleed. It produced at present but trifling pain, and he was able to interrogate his intended

son-

son-in-law about the pursuit in which he had been engaged.

In order to prevent the possibility of his escape, the Count was now tied in such a way that he could stir neither his hands nor his feet. The wounds he had received, though not mortal, were painful. On the bare floor of the room over the refectory, wet, bleeding, bemired, lay the degraded victim of licentiousness and vice. But no sign of repentance was visible in his looks; no sound of contrition escaped his lips. He looked a wretch and a villain.

The outlaws, six in number, including Garquine, to solace themselves after their dangers and fatigues, and to entertain their new guests, the three men of Theodore's party, produced a keg of brandy. The song, the toast, and the tale, went merrily round with the glass; loud laughter shook the

the walls, and jollity usurped, for an hour, the empire of dreariness. Theodore was a little alarmed lest their festivity should occasion remissness of vigilance. He ascended to the room where they were, cautioned them against excess, and examined the means that had been employed by them to secure their prisoner. Seeing that escape was impracticable, so securely had they bound each limb, he no longer felt apprehension, and he retired.

The party continued their debauch until they had emptied the keg, and exhausted their hilarity. They all fell asleep except Garquine and Hénoch. He was kept awake by the pain of the wound he had received in his side, and she had a project to execute which required immediate attention. This was to lead the Count into the cavern, and there force him to point out the place where

where his treasure was concealed. She whispered her plan to Hénoch, and he approved of it, but he declined lending any assistance unless the other four were consulted. This proviso was not agreeable to her, for she had calculated on effecting her design with his sole assistance, while the others were asleep, and consequently of procuring one half of the gold without the knowledge of her husband; but Hénoch was inflexible, and she was compelled to submit.

She then awakened the other four, and told them how easy it would be to make their fortunes. Said she in whispers to them, "We shall promise him his liberty, but when we get the money, we shall bring him back a prisoner, so that our rewards from Mr. Bolton will be still secure; and,

as

as to the danger of any party in the cavern, it is all nonsense. If there were any such party, would they not have made some attempt before this to liberate him?" The measure was unanimously agreed to, and the prisoner was told, in a low voice, that he now had an opportunity of gaining his liberty, if he would point out the spot where the treasure was concealed.

He readily agreed to the terms, and uttered many professions of gratitude and obligation. To enable him to walk they removed the rope that bound his legs, and Hénoch and Marco were stationed behind him, each with a cocked pistol in his hand, which, they swore, should be discharged into his head at the first symptom he should betray of an intention to escape. The party, consisting of seven, now mounted

to

to the belfry, carrying two torches, and leaving Theodore's three men behind them asleep.

Arrived at the narrow stairs, the timber which blocked up the passage was removed, and they walked down, four preceding, and two following, the prisoner. They descended without accident, but within four feet of the lowest step, there stood on the floor of the cavern a figure, whose wildness and ferocity well accorded with the hideousness of the place. It was Lonchiderimos. He had gotten an immense club in his hand, and he stood as if guarding the entrance to his mysterious empire. Gaunt and haggard, of lofty stature, with frenetic gaze and outrageous aspect, the maniac brandished his formidable weapon. Egfryd, whose rapidity of thought and promptness of stratagem enabled him to draw

draw advantage from the most untoward circumstances, saw at a glance that this madman might be induced to assist him.

"Sir! stranger!" roared he forth, "you see the most injured and abused of mankind! Rescue me from these villains, and my life and everlasting attachment are yours!" Lonchiderimos had scarcely heard these words when he levelled two of the banditti. Surprise seized the others. The shots which had been threatened were fired; but they availed not. The miscreant felt a sudden accession of strength and energy, though his ear and shoulder were lacerated by one of the two bullets which were shot at his head. He tore himself from the grasp of those who endeavoured to hold him, broke asunder his manacles, and snatched a sword from Dissart.

With this he faced about, and exerted prodigies-

prodigies of strength against his enemies. The madman assisted him bravely. There were two opposed to five men and Garquine. Daring men they were, and a matchless virago was she. On one side was extraordinary skill, preternatural strength, courage, despair, and frenzy. On the other, numbers, boldness, exasperation, and dexterity. The maniac and the Count, the former with his terrible club, the latter with a murdering sword, gave a contusion or a scar at every stroke they aimed. It was death or a wound to come within the sphere of either of their weapons, with such killing and impetuous rapidity were they whirled through the hissing air. The two, thinking to effect their retreat from the cavern, retired as they fought, and were followed by the six.

A terrible blow, from the madman's club,

upon Hénoch's temple, scattered his brains upon the earth, and a mighty sabre stroke at the same moment severed the head of Ferrau, the least odious of the gang, from its tottering trunk. Jacot pushed a rapier at the heart of Egfryd, and in doing so approached too near to his fatal blade: that blade, with horrible force, clove his scull in twain. Two only of the ruffians remained alive; Marco and Dissart with Garquine. Her eyes flashed fire; her mouth vomited vengeance; she danced with very rage; a fury from hell she seemed. The wary Marco and circumspect Dissart kept without the range of the whizzing weapons, and reserved four shots. One aimed at the maniac, the other at the Count. Each shot took effect. The ruffians levelled again, and the two great combatants fell to the ground.

Garquine

Garquine rushed on them with her carving-knife, and cut, and slashed, and scalped her prostrate foes, with needless and wanton barbarity. "Hold!" exclaimed Marco, "don't kill the Count! let us get the gold!" The hope of plunder arrested her cruel arm. "Oh!" faintly cried the dying Egfryd, "don't kill me, and I will show it to you. See yonder vault with the step. Lead me thither, and I will point out to you where the coffer lies concealed." The vault was within a few paces of them. Having disarmed him and Lonchiderimos, they supported the former to the recess he had mentioned. He threw himself on the earth within it. He was a bloody and shocking figure. He was no longer to be recognized. "Beneath that board," said he, in a voice that was scarcely audible, "you will find what you seek."

Garquine, too late, was sensible of her imprudence. She saw in the vault an apparatus, containing a flint, steel, and springs; and she likewise saw some gunpowder. With the velocity of a tigress bounding on her prey, she grappled the wounded Egfryd. His arms she seized with her powerful hands, and in his face she fastened her terrible teeth. She endeavours to force him back into the cavern, but in vain she pulls, in vain she bites. He touches a spring, and a magazine of powder, placed there by him long before, receives a spark.

Tremendous were the effects of the explosion. The roof of the cavern was blown into the air, together with several of the massy columns which had for ages supported its enormous weight. A great part of the ruined cloister was tumbled to the ground;

ground; the whole island was shaken; and the Count and Garquine, the maniac and Marco, were not only blown out of the cavern, but cast, in the whirlwind of the fiery convulsion, upon the border of the morass. Marco was killed, but the others yet breathed. Garquine still kept her hold of the Count, and still were the teeth of the fury fixed in his face. Death alone could unlock her ferocious jaws.

The commotion of the elements continued, and a part of the causeway, distant as it was, loosened by the shock, fell into the cavity beneath it. The spring that communicated with the powder which had been lodged there, was touched and disturbed, and a second explosion took place, beyond comparison more awful than the first. The air was filled with water, earth, and mud. Rocks and splinters of

rocks were shot into the clouds, and even to the extremities of the island. The cavern was filled by the river; the remainder of the cloister fell; the *Isle de Peine* tottered on its solid props; the *Charente* retreated towards its source, and nature trembled. A hurricane, an earthquake, and a volcano, now exhibited, for the first time, their united horrours. The silence of death succeeded.

During the convulsion, all was terrour, all was noise, all was flame. A fragment of flint, hurled from the causeway, reached the spot where lay Garquine and the Count. It struck that barbarous female in the head. It deprived her of life. She fell back. Her cannibal teeth relinquished their inhuman hold, and from them dropped a part of Egfryd's face. He had, happily, erred in his calculations on the effects of the two magazines

magazines of gunpowder; that at the canal, finding less opposition on the side next the water than in the direction of the cloister, had expended a great share of its force in blowing the softer part of the causeway into the river; and had the other one been smaller in quantity or weaker, it would certainly have been more fatal; but by its immoderate violence, unroofing as it did the whole of the caverns in an instant, it discharged much of its fury innoxiously, in the air.

The raft was on its return with a surgeon when these events took place. Luckily for those upon it, it had not reached the morass. The surgeon, hearing the two frightful explosions, and seeing the prodigious flashes, begged that they would put about in the now violently agitated water, and not venture to approach so dangerous a

spot; but the faithful and intrepid Guillaume swore that they should proceed to the place of their destination, and that he would shoot the first person who should attempt to return. The men yielded to his persuasions, or were intimidated by his threats, and they all landed on the *Isle de Peine.*

The day began to dawn. The clouds of water, earth, and stone, that had obscured the air, were now no more, when Guillaume and his party ran to the heap of ruins, which, an hour before, had been the cloister. It chanced, providentially, that under the refectory there had been no vault, and that its roof had been an arch. The room above it, in which Theodore's three men had been sleeping, had likewise been arched. On the shock of the second explosion, this part of the building had been

been separated from its foundations, and prostrated to the earth; but such was its solidity, and the excellence of the ancient mortar which cemented it, that it still remained entire, and the persons within it, though some of them had been bruised and cut, were not killed.

Mr. and Miss Bolton, Theodore and his three men, saved thus miraculously, were taken out of the ruins, and the surgeon proceeded to exercise his art. He first dressed the old gentleman's wound, and without hesitation pronounced it to be not dangerous. Julia, in her joy at these words, forgot both her fright and her danger. She and her lover had escaped without any hurt. The three men were next attended to, and it was found that none of them had received any material injury.

The whole party was impatient to quit the *Isle de Peine.* They advanced quickly to the raft, and were about to enter it, when the appearance of some bodies on the edge of the morass attracted the attention of Guillaume. He, with four of the men, ran towards them, and finding the Count and the maniac still alive, the two wounded combatants were carried to the raft, and embarked upon it with the party.

His loss of blood, his great exertions, his terrour, the strangeness of the adventure he had been engaged in, and the terrible shocks of the explosions, had dissipated the insanity of the *Chevalier Du Lange.* Every possible attention was bestowed, not only on him, but on the nefarious Egfryd, in Theodore's cottage, whither they all arrived safely. The wounds of the Cheva-

lier

lier were soon healed, as was likewise that which Mr. Bolton had received; but the Count's recovery was more slow.

He was at length declared out of danger, though a spectacle to excite disgust and dread. The officers of justice waited, meanwhile, in the neighbourhood, until his removal to prison could be effected; but, with returning strength, he seemed to acquire new desperation.

One day that the surgeon and Theodore were present, his depravity appeared in all its enormity. "You have taken me, Dalbert, and taken me alive," said he, his voice and looks denoting at once sudden alienation of intellect and inextinguishable wickedness, "but am I to blame that I was not found a corpse? Am I to blame that you escaped from the grave, with the wife of my victim, De Solase? You intend me for

for the scaffold, but look well to it. You are about to marry a virgin too! Prithee question that virgin about the *Chateau de St. Uldrich*. Remind her of the night of her strange illness. On that night I occupied a place in the maiden's chamber. Marry her, sage young man, but, in espousing her, ally yourself to a beggar. One hundred and twenty thousand pounds sterling, the whole property of her father and herself, I am proud to tell you, was obtained by me out of the English funds—by me, whose death will rob you of all this property, and rob you, likewise, of your revenge. You escaped the hands of Gaspar (who fell by this arm at Calais), of Conrad, and of Bolton, all of whom I employed to murder you; you escaped the shot I fired at you in the *Isle de Peine;* but you lose your revenge, and you wed a beggar.

Ha!

Ha! ha! ha! ha! Excellent, Egfryd! you have robbed him of his revenge and a hundred and twenty thousand pounds! Admirably done! ha! ha! ha! And more —thus I prevent your cruelty—thus release myself from ignominy and a hated world." Uttering these words, he seized a fork that lay on a chair near his bed, and plunged it into his breast. The surgeon and Theodore were not quick enough to seize his arm before it struck the mortal blow. In an hour he died, raving and in convulsions, but in his raving he disclosed much of his iniquity.

Mr. Bolton, by the declaration of the Count, frantick though he was, was enabled to recover the property which that monster had so infamously obtained. The magistracy of Cognac being applied to, had his cottage searched, and in a *portmanteau,* that he

he had brought with him from England, bills drawn in London on Paris, to the amount of a hundred and twenty thousand pounds sterling, were found. These the French minister (as soon as he was apprized of the circumstances) ordered to be paid to Mr. Bolton. Pierre Dontache was soon afterwards prosecuted by Theodore for the attack on him when forced to the grave; and the ruffian was also prosecuted by Mr. Bolton for the treachery and violence he had practised towards him and Julia, on the day they were brought to the *Isle de Peine*. Pierre Dontache was, for these offences, condemned to the gallies for life. After his conviction, he confessed that he and Gaspar Pontgebre were to have assassinated Theodore in Bourdeaux, on his return thither from England, had he remained there another day.

Theodore

Theodore and Julia were married, and masses were purchased for the unfortunate Aminta, her brother, and her son. Garquine and Marco were buried in Cognac, but the remains of the other four outlaws were never found, nor those of the caged infant in the cavern, or of its unburied mother.

Mr. Bolton lives with his daughter; and the *Chevalier Du Lange*, restored to his reason, is a partaker of their hospitality. Theodore and Julia afford a bright example of conjugal virtue and fidelity. They have two children, a girl and a boy, and their happiness is perfect.

I have arrived at the termination of my labours. I have lived to depict, in his true colours, the atrocious Count Egfryd, and to represent Theodore and Julia according to their merits. If the miserable end of the Count

Count shall deter from vice, or the happiness of Julia and her husband incite to virtue; if any individual in society shall, by this Work, be saved from a bad action, or drawn to a good one, my object in writing it will have been accomplished.

Farewell, my Theodore; farewell, my Julia. Your ancient friend and kinsman has now to attend to the important concern of dying. He has now to prepare for another world.

AUGUSTUS JACOB CRANDOLPH.

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